

Understanding God's "If My People..." Offer to the United States in 2 Chronicles 7:14

Introduction and Synopsis

In conversations among Bible-savvy Christians, quoting the first few words in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is sufficient to start a lively discussion of God's promise and instruction, ***"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."*** (New King James Version of the Bible¹)

It's an important topic, especially regarding the rapidly accelerating animosities, divisiveness, lawlessness, and wickedness within the United States, but do we Christians really understand the meaning of each word in God's offer and the profound implications? The word study and analysis that follows is intended to uncover the fundamental truths embedded in God's offer in 2 Chronicles 7:14 and encourage each of us to fulfill its specified requirements so that God will heal our land.

Merely quoting 2 Chronicles 7:14 will not heal our nation. It requires actions by each of us that begin with understanding and embracing two foundational Biblical truths declared by God to His people:

1. God is love and wants an everlasting love relationship with His people. God's core Biblical message is that *He will be our God, we are to be His people, and He will dwell in our midst.*
2. Because God desires a relationship based on love, people have the freedom of choice. *We each must choose either eternal life or death by accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and live our lives accordingly.*

Key word study findings summarized by phrase:

- Beginning with *"If My people who are called by my name,"* God is addressing His offer specifically to Christians (followers of Jesus Christ that belong to Him), and their awaited response will determine whether God will heal the United States to the benefit of both the saved and unsaved.
- God's offer specifies four separate actions required solely by Christians: *"humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways."* Prayer alone is not sufficient. Completing only three of the stipulated actions is inadequate. We are to diligently seek God's presence, His countenance, not just His hand to heal our land. Turning from our wicked ways demands more than words of promise and commitment. A demonstrated change is required. The fundamental issue is restoring the covenant relationship between God and His people living in the United States.
- God will *"hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land"* only after His followers complete the stated four requirements in His "this for that" offer.

Eight actions to move forward with the stipulations required for God to heal the United States are listed under **Path Forward – Choices to Make "Mission Impossible"** at the end of this word study.

If God has called and chosen you to participate in the actions to respond to God's standing offer to heal our land, please invest the time to read, digest, and respond to the details that follow.

¹ Except as noted, all scriptures listed are from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible

2 Chronicles 7:14 Word Study and Analysis:

What Christians Need to Know, Understand, and Do for God to Heal the United States

Foundational Truth #1 – God is love and wants an everlasting love relationship with His people

God's offer to heal our land is based on His love for us: "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16). It is important to note that in the Greek language, other meanings for "abide" are "dwell" and "be present."

The three-part love relationship God wants with His people is crisply stated in Ezekiel 37:27 (NASB): "**My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.**" Forty separate verses in the Bible contain declarations by God regarding having a people, being their God, and living with them and in them.

As His people, we have the profound privilege of being in God's presence now and forever. When God chooses to dwell with us, we have the opportunity to sense and know His *tangible presence* as noted in the following verses:

- Psalm 16:11 – "You will show me the path of life; In **Your presence** is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."
- Psalm 51:11 – "Do not cast me away from **Your presence**, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."
- Psalm 95:2 – "Let us come before **His presence** with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with Psalms."
- Psalm 100:2 – "Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before **His presence** with singing."
- Psalm 101:7 – "He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in **my presence.**"
- Psalm 140:13 – "Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; the upright shall dwell in **Your presence.**"

This is more than an Old Testament position. It is repeated in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 6:16, "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. **As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'**" The Apostle Paul states in Acts 3:19, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

The extent of God's love for us is firmly established by what Jesus, the Son of God, stated in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus Christ was sent to earth by God the Father and literally lived (dwelled) among His people until He ascended to Heaven forty days after His crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Before departing, Jesus reassured His followers by telling them, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26) The very presence of God in the form of the Holy Spirit replaced Jesus on the earth and is on-going as "God with us."

Matthew 28:19-20 records Jesus' final instruction to His disciples prior to His ascension back to Heaven, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." These New Testament statements by Jesus also reveal the fact that our God is a triune God known by Christians as "the Trinity" – one God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle John's vision recorded in Revelation 21:3 confirms that this love relationship between God and His people will continue for eternity: "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." (Emphasis added)

Note: Satan also wants to be our god, wants us to accept him as our god, and intends to dwell in our midst, but requires an environment of fear and evil, with no love or peace.

Foundational Truth #2 – Because God desires a relationship based on love, people have the freedom of choice

God is not looking for slaves or robots to be His people. God's covenant love relationships are based on free choice and are not forced. *However, our choices have strong present and eternal consequence.*

Moses understood this well, having spent forty years in the wilderness because his people chose to not trust God and rebelled against God's command to enter the promised land of Canaan out of fear of the inhabitants (See Deuteronomy 1: 26-45). In his lengthy final speech as his nation again faced the choice of entering Canaan or staying in the wilderness in Deuteronomy Chapter 30, Moses instructs them to choose God, and summarizes the choices before them:

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that ***I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*** that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." (Deuteronomy 30:19-20, ***Emphasis Added***)

As the leader replacing Moses, Joshua restates the choices as the nation prepared to finally cross the Jordan River into Canaan:

"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)

In the New Testament, accepting God's offer of a new covenant for eternal life also requires a pivotal free-will choice. **Each person must decide for themselves whether to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and accept Him as their Lord and Savior.** Jesus makes this choice very clear in His conversation with Martha, recorded in John 11:25-27.

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’”

2 Chronicles Biblical Context for the specifics in 2 Chronicles 7:14

Building on these two foundational Biblical truths, a review of the Biblical context in the first seven chapters of 2 Chronicles is needed to develop a deeper understanding of God’s statement in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

In **Chapter 1**, King Solomon is established as King of Israel, replacing his father, King David, and prays for wisdom and knowledge to rule the nation. Because he didn’t ask for riches, God granted him wisdom and knowledge, and also made him very wealthy. In **Chapter 2**, as instructed earlier by his father, Solomon proceeds to build a temple for God on Mount Moriah (“the Temple Mount”) in Jerusalem and also a palace for himself nearby. **Chapters 3 and 4** describe the temple construction and its furnishings.

The work completed, in **Chapter 5** Solomon assembles the elders of Israel and has the priests bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the Tabernacle of David in the City of David. With all the men of Israel assembled, the priests place the ark in the most holy place in the temple. Trumpeters, singers, and other instruments of music then praise and thank God. Verses 13 and 14 state that as they sang, “For He is good, for His mercy endures forever,” the glory of the Lord filled the house of God such that the priests could not continue to minister because of the cloud. God tangibly demonstrated His Presence in the midst of the temple.

Chapter 6 records King Solomon blessing the assembly of Israel and the Lord God of Israel, followed by a wide-ranging prayer. As the new King of Israel, verses 18-21 record Solomon’s foundational request to the Lord God of Israel, asking Him to forgive His people when they pray their supplications toward the newly constructed Temple:

"But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant prays toward this place. And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive." (Emphasis Added)

King Solomon then mentions several potential scenarios that are historically likely to happen again, asking God to forgive the sins of His people when they turn away from their sins and back to Him. In each example of repentance cited in verses 24-39 in Solomon’s prayer, he notes that they turn back to God after He afflicted them because of their sins against Him.

According to 2 Chronicles 7:1, “When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.” This time the priests couldn’t even enter the temple because it was filled again with the glory of the Lord, His

discernable tangible Presence. King Solomon and all the people then offered sacrifices and dedicated the House of God, followed by praise and worship, and seven days of feasts.

Verses 12-22 in Chapter 7 capture the Lord’s detailed response to Solomon’s prayer when He appeared to Solomon at night. Focusing on verses 13 and 14, God said, “When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, **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.**” (Emphasis Added)

There are four initial observations about God’s response to Solomon’s prayer that are reinforced by the word-by-word study that follows:

1. Immediately after Solomon finished praying, God responded to his question, "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth?" – but not with words. *In a powerful second demonstration of His Presence, God consumed the burnt offering with fire and filled the temple with His glory.*
2. Before responding to Solomon’s request to put His name on the temple, *God revealed His priority by first addressing the relationship between Him and His people called by His name, and not the new temple.*
3. Solomon asks God, “that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night.” God agrees, *but only after first instructing His people to seek His face.*
4. *Instead of agreeing to instantly forgive the sins of His people and heal their land in response to their prayers of supplication (i.e., earnest requests), God requires four actions from His people: humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways.”*

Before proceeding further, a pivotal question is whether God’s acceptance of Solomon’s request applies to today. The Apostle Paul’s instruction to Timothy answers the question: “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*” (2 Timothy 3:16) When citing “all scripture,” note that Paul is specifically referring to the Old Testament since the New Testament portion of the Bible was still being written.

One additional fundamental truth about 2 Chronicles 7:14 that must not be forgotten or trivialized – *it is a statement made by God to His people.*

Word-by-Word Study of 2 Chronicles 7:14

Word by Word	Meaning ² and Implications
If	“If” means “in the event that, allowing that, on the assumption that, and on condition that.” God is using “if” to connect His four stipulations to the three results He is offering, “ <i>I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.</i> ” It is explicitly introducing an offer of something given or received for something else.
My	“My” means “relating to me or myself especially as possessor.” God is using “My” to specify that He is the possessor of the word that follows, limiting the scope of the

² English definitions are extracts from the Merriam-Webster On-Line Dictionary at www.Merriam-Webster.com; Hebrew definitions are from Strong’s Talking Greek and Hebrew Dictionary.

	sentence to <i>His people</i> .
people	<p>“People” refers to “human beings making up a group or assembly or linked by a common interest.” The Hebrew word for “people” is “am” (pronounced, ahm) and its meaning includes “nation.” It is derived from the Hebrew word, “amam,” which means “a people (as a congregated unit); specifically a tribe (such as those of Israel).”</p> <p>Note that God sees human beings as individual persons and as people in groups and nations. The crucifixion of Jesus was for each individual that would believe in Him:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 3:16 (Jesus speaking) – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” • Galatians 2:20 (the Apostle Paul speaking) – “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”
who	“Who” is “used in reference to persons or groups.” God is using it here to further identify the specific “people” He is addressing.
are	“Are” is a present tense verb indicating that God is speaking to His present people, independent of the time that His statement is repeated. By saying, “My people who are,” it is relevant to His people at any time His statement is quoted.
called	<p>“Called” in this context means “to speak of or address by a specified name.” It also means “give a name to.” Its use indicates that God has given a unique name to identify His people and that when He refers to or speaks to them, He addresses them by that name.</p> <p>The Hebrew word God used here for “called” is “qara” (pronounced, kaw-waw’). It’s meanings in Hebrew hint that God had multiple intentions when using the word qara: “a primitive root through the idea of <i>accosting</i> a person met; to <i>call</i> out to (i.e., properly <i>address</i> by name). <i>Not only is He specifically calling out to His people, He is confronting them about their behavior.</i></p>
by	“By” in this context means “according to.” An example of its use that applies here is, “He called us <i>by</i> name.”
My	This second possessive use of “my” further emphasizes that <i>the actions God is requiring in the “something for something” stipulations are <u>not</u> directed to all people</i> . It is His people, called by His name, that are to humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways.
name	<p>Used here, “name” has two relevant English meanings: “a word that constitutes the distinctive designation of a person” and the word, “reputation.” The Hebrew word translated “name” is “shem” (pronounced, shame). Its relevant meanings include “definite and conspicuous position, as a mark of individuality; by implication honor, authority, character.”</p> <p>It is therefore not coincidental that in the English language, His people are called “Christians,” referring to those “who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ.” Looking deeper at the relevance of what God was saying, the name “Christ” comes from the Latin word, “Christus,” and the Greek word, “Christos,” both literally meaning</p>

	<p>“anointed,” based on the character and reputation of Jesus Christ. <i>True Christians walk in a covenant relationship with God, obey His laws, and strive to be like our savior, Jesus Christ</i> (see Matthew 26:38, Hebrews 9:15, and Galatians 5:22).</p> <p>The implication of the phrase, “My people who are called by My name,” is profound for a land or nation that desperately needs healed. God is not speaking to those that have not accepted Him as the only true God (see John 17:3), and more importantly, <i>their God</i>. God is not waiting for the unsaved to “humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways.” <i>God is addressing His offer specifically to the people that belong to Him in the land, and their awaited response will determine whether God will heal their land to the benefit of both the saved and unsaved.</i></p>
will	<p>“Will” in this context is a verb used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “express futurity” (i.e., a future action) • “express desire, choice, willingness, consent, or in negative constructions, refusal” • “express determination, insistence, persistence, or willfulness.” <p>Its use here introduces the four specific actions that God requires of His people that if done, will prompt Him to heal their land: humble themselves, pray, seek God’s face, and turn from their wicked ways.</p>
humble	<p>“Humble” in this context means, “to make (someone) humble in spirit or manner,” and “to destroy the power, independence, or prestige of.” As an intended end state, “humble” is an adjective that means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “not proud or haughty: not arrogant or assertive” • “reflecting, expressing, or offered in a spirit of deference or submission” • “ranking low in a hierarchy or scale : insignificant, unpretentious <p>The Hebrew word for “humble” used here is “kana,” (pronounced, kaw-nah’) and means “properly to bend the knee, bring down (low) into subjection, humble (self), subdue.” Thus this first requirement is to reject all forms of pride, embrace and acknowledge God’s supremacy, and demonstrate our complete submission to His rule.</p>
themselves,	<p>“Themselves” means “those identical ones that are they” and is the plural word for the pronouns “himself” and “herself.” In this context, <i>God is referring back to His people, and no one else.</i></p>
and	<p>“And” is a conjunction word that means the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “used as a function word to indicate connection or addition, especially of items within the same class or type” • “used to join sentence elements of the same grammatical rank or function” • “used as a function word to join one verb (such as go, come, try) to another so that together they are logically equivalent in purpose.” <p>Thus the four action verbs “humble,” “pray,” “seek,” and “turn” are a set of linked requirements of equal importance. God is requiring that His people complete each action to obtain His promised response. <i>Prayer alone is not sufficient. Completing only one, two, or three of the stipulated actions is inadequate.</i></p>
pray	<p>“Pray” is a verb that means:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “entreat, implore – often used as a function word in introducing a question, request, or plea” • “to get or bring by praying” • “to make a request in a humble manner” • “to address God with adoration, confession, supplication, or thanksgiving.” <p>“Supplication” is based on the verb, “supplicate,” which means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “to make a humble entreaty especially to pray to God” • “to ask for earnestly and humbly” <p>The Hebrew word for “pray” is “palal” (pronounced, paw-lal’) and means “pray, to intercede, make supplication.”</p> <p>For this requirement, God’s people must humbly and earnestly intercede with specifics on behalf of the United States (or any other homeland), asking God to heal our land. God tightly combined prayer as an action with humbling oneself and seeking His face, basically instructing us how and what to pray. <i>Turning from our wicked ways demands more than words of promise and commitment. It requires a demonstrated change.</i></p>
and	<p>Reuse of “and” as a conjunction, linking the four action verbs “humble,” “pray,” “seek,” and “turn” as requirements of equal importance.</p>
seek	<p>“Seek” is a verb that means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “to resort to, go to” • “to go in search of, look for” • “to try to discover” • “to ask for, request, seek advice” • “to try to acquire or gain” • “to make an attempt, try” <p>The Hebrew word for “seek” is “baqash” (pronounced, baw-kash’) and means “to search out (by any method, specifically in worship or prayer); by implication to strive after: ask, beg, beseech, desire, enquire, get, make inquisition, make request.” <i>Note that it does not mean “see.”</i></p> <p>This third requirement is not a casual action. Its significance is based on what God says His people are to seek – <i>His presence.</i></p>
My	<p>God’s third possessive use of “my” is focusing on Himself.</p>
face,	<p>In this context, “face” is an attribute noun with the following meanings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the front part of the head that in humans extends from the forehead to the chin” • “the face as a means of identification, countenance” • “presence” <p>The Hebrew word for “face” is “paniyim” (pronounced, paw-neem’) that when used as a noun means “face,” but the word “paniyim” is used in a great variety of literal and figurative applications as a preposition, such as “countenance,” “presence,” and “person.” <i>Summarizing the various meanings, we are to diligently seek God’s presence,</i></p>

	<p><i>His countenance.</i></p> <p><i>Note that God is requiring His people to seek His face (presence) and not just His hand in order to heal their land. The implications become clear by referring back to the two foundational Biblical truths and the context in 2 Chronicles. God seeks to demonstrate His love through a covenant relationship. Solomon’s prayer addresses the repetitive history of God’s people sinning against Him, incurring the national penalties of breaking their covenant relationship, eventually followed by repentance by His people, and then God graciously responding by healing their land.</i></p> <p><i>The key issue is the health of the covenant relationship between God and His people living in a land. Do they love Him and want to be with Him because of who He is and His love for them, or do they merely seek His mighty healing Hand when they need to be delivered from attacking nations or when they are being disciplined by their loving Father?</i></p> <p>R.T. Kendall, pastor of Westminster Chapel in London for twenty-five years, made the following observation in “The Silent Divorce” article he authored, <i>“The people God will use most are those who have sought His face (getting to know Him and desiring more of Him) rather than His hand (what they can get from Him).”</i> (Charisma Magazine, October 2019)</p> <p>Seeking God’s face was not a new concept to Solomon. King David gave him the following instruction in 1 Chronicles 28:9, “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.” <i>Solomon later wrote in Proverbs 7:15. “So I came out to meet you, Diligently to seek your face, And I have found you.”</i> Isaiah 55:6 adds, “Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.”</p> <p>Deeper implications of seeking God’s face are found in God’s response in Exodus 33:20-23 when Moses asks to see His glory, <i>“But He said, ‘You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.’</i> And the LORD said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. <i>Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.’”</i> (Emphasis Added)</p> <p>The Hebrew word for “see” that God is using is “raa” (pronounced, raw-ah’) and in this context means “see, behold, gaze, look one upon another, view.” He uses the same Hebrew word, “paniyim” for face, in this context referring to His physical face. The Hebrew word for “Lord” in this verse is “yhwh” (pronounced jeh-ho-caw’). “Jehovah” is the Jewish national name of God, and to Christians it’s a name for Father God. <i>The implication is that literally seeing Father God’s face is reserved for heaven.</i></p> <p>Literally seeing the face of God’s Son, Jesus, is a different matter. <i>He died for our sins so</i></p>
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	<p><i>that we can be in God’s presence and live.</i> The Apostle Peter states in 1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.” The Apostle Paul provides further insight into what Jesus accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romans 6:11, <i>“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”</i> • Ephesians 2:4-5, <i>“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”</i> • Galatians 2:20, <i>“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”</i> <p>The significant deeper implication related to the phrase, “seek My face,” is that <i>when we as believers in Christ seek and see Him as our Lord and Savior, we indeed die to self and sin, and live by faith, keeping us in intimate relationship with the triune God</i> comprised of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (See Mathew 28:19)</p> <p>Pivotal questions for Christians in the United States regarding seeking God’s face:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have we been deceived into believing that seeking God’s face means seeking “His presents,” ignoring “His presence?”</i> • <i>Is our focus on seeing miracles occur, or on worshipping our heavenly Father?</i> • <i>Are we pursuing the “power of God,” but ignoring the opportunity to dwell in the “presence of God,” failing to understand that His power always accompanies His presence?</i> • <i>And specifically for some Christians, do we have a passion for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but no interest in the fruit of the Holy Spirit?</i> <p>Honest answers to these questions will likely mandate prayers of repentance, turning away from behaviors rooted in pride, and refocusing on our relationship with God.</p>
<p>and</p>	<p>Reuse of “and” as a conjunction, linking the four action verbs “humble,” “pray,” “seek,” and “turn” as requirements of equal importance.</p>
<p>turn</p>	<p>The English word, “turn” has multiple meanings and can be used as a verb or a noun. In this context it is a verb that means “the action or an act of giving or taking a different direction, to set in another especially contrary direction, to cause to retreat, to cause to go in a particular direction.”</p> <p>The Hebrew word for “turn” is “shub” (pronounced, shoob) and also has many meanings. In this context, the best fits are “to turn back (hence, away, but not necessarily returning to the starting point; to retreat; cease; cause or make to return, reverse, turn from; withdraw.”</p> <p>For a more complete perspective on the word “turn,” in the portion of Solomon’s prayer recorded in 2 Chronicles 6:36-39, “shub” is translated “repent” instead of “turn.”</p> <p>“When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become</p>

	<p>angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and <i>repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness'; and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You.</i>" (Emphasis Added)</p> <p>"Repent" is a verb that occurs thirty-two times in the NKJV Bible and is commonly used by Christians. It means <i>"to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life, to feel regret or contrition, and to change one's mind."</i></p> <p>The implication of the combined meanings is that positive action and change is required to deliberately choose to cease a current direction, and actually turn away and retreat. <i>Saying that you repent of your sins is substantially different from ceasing the sin and returning to righteousness.</i></p>
from	<p>"From" is a preposition that in this case is "used to indicate physical separation or an act or condition of removal, abstention, exclusion, release, or subtraction." <i>Combined with "turn," it demands a demonstrated action and change.</i></p>
their	<p>"Their" is an adjective that means "of or relating to them or themselves especially as possessors, agents, or objects of an action." It is the plural of "his" and/or "her." In this case, <i>God is referring to His people regarding their current direction and behavior that they possess.</i></p>
wicked	<p>"Wicked" is an adjective with the following meanings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "morally very bad: evil" • "fierce, vicious" • "disposed to or marked by mischief" • "disgustingly unpleasant: vile" • "causing or likely to cause harm, distress, or trouble" • "going beyond reasonable or predictable limits: of exceptional quality or degree" <p>The Hebrew word for "wicked" is "ra" (pronounced, rah) and its meanings include "wicked, bad, evil (natural or moral), harm, hurt, trouble, wretchedness, and wrong."</p> <p>Note that God used the word "wicked" and not "sinful." Synonyms for "sinful" and "sinfulness" are "bad, black, dark, evil, immoral, iniquitous, nefarious, rotten, unethical, unlawful, unrighteous, unsavory, vicious, vile, villainous, wicked, and wrong." In contrast, <i>synonyms for "wickedness" include "devilishness, devilment, and devilry (action performed with the help of the devil: witchcraft).</i></p> <p>The Apostle Paul provides lists of "works of the flesh" and the opposing "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:19-23 that are relevant to understanding the meaning of "wicked."</p>

	<p><i>“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Emphasis Added)</i></p> <p>Paul provides an expanded list of the “ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” in Romans 1:18-32 that reads like a checklist of the wickedness being practiced in the United States and world-wide. For Christians in our nation, Paul’s phrase in verse 32 must not be ignored: “who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, <i>not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.</i>” (Emphasis added)</p>
ways,	<p>“Ways” is a noun that means “in (such) a way, course, direction, or manner.” The Hebrew word for “ways” is “derek” (pronounced, deh’-rek) and means “a road (as trodden); figuratively a course of life or mode of action.”</p> <p>In the phrase, “turn from their wicked ways,” God is noting that the wickedness of His people has become imbedded in their manner, course of life, and actions. <i>As the fourth requirement for Him to heal their land, God is pointedly confronting habitual sin and demands that it stop.</i></p> <p>Two Psalms define the direction that they are to turn back to: <i>righteousness for His name’s sake and restoration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 23:3 – “He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.” • Psalm 143:11 – “Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake! For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.”
then	<p>“Then” in this context is an adverb that means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “at that time” • “soon after that, next in order of time” • “as a consequence” <p><i>God is using it to introduce what He will do in response if His people “humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways.”</i></p>
I	<p>“I” is a pronoun that means “the one who is speaking or writing.” <i>God is referring to Himself and is declaring that He personally owns the action to be taken in His offer.</i></p>
will	<p>In this second use of the word, “will,” <i>God is identifying and committing to His first of three offered actions, “hear from heaven,” if and after His people begin their required actions.</i></p>
hear	<p>In this context, “hear” is a verb that means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “to perceive or become aware of by the ear” • “to gain knowledge of by hearing” • “to listen to with attention”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “law: to listen to legal arguments in a hearing or case” • “law: to take testimony from (i.e., hear witnesses)” <p>The Hebrew word for “hear” is “shama” (pronounced, shaw-mah’) and means “to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention), to hear attentively, and listen.” <i>God’s first commitment in His offer is to listen attentively to what His people say as they humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways.</i></p>
from	<p>In this second use of “from,” it means “to indicate the starting or focal point of an activity.” <i>God is using it to point to where He will be when hearing His peoples’ responses.</i></p>
heaven,	<p>“Heaven” in this context means “the dwelling place of the Deity and the blessed dead.” The Hebrew word for “heaven” is “shamayin” (pronounced, shaw-mah’-yim) and is derived from a root word meaning “to be lofty, the aloft sky.”</p> <p><i>God commits to listen from His dwelling place in Heaven, implying that He will be withholding the awareness of His Presence on earth until His people complete their required actions and He heals their land. Key implication: His Presence brings healing!</i></p>
and	<p>Reuse of “and” as a conjunction, linking the three action verbs “hear,” “forgive,” and “heal.”</p>
will	<p>In this third use of the word, “will,” God is identifying and committing to His second and third actions in His offer, “forgive their sin and heal their land,” <u>if and after His people complete</u> their required actions.</p>
forgive	<p>“Forgive” is a verb that means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “to cease to feel resentment against an offender: pardon and forgive one’s enemies” • “to give up resentment of or claim to requital (forgive an insult; to grant relief from payment of forgive a debt)” • “to grant forgiveness” <p>The Hebrew word for “forgive” is “salah” (pronounced, saw-lakh’) and means “forgive, pardon, spare.” To restore the desired relationship with His people, God is offering to grant forgiveness if and when they actually humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways. <i>For God to forgive our sins, we must first stop the offense, stop the sinning.</i></p>
their	<p>In this second use of “their,” <i>God is referring to His people regarding the sins that they engaged in and have now turned away from and back to practicing righteousness.</i></p>
sin	<p>“Sin” in this context is a noun that means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “an offense against religious or moral law” • “an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible” • “an often serious shortcoming: fault” • “transgression of the law of God” <p>The Hebrew word for “sin” is “hattat” (pronounced, khat-taw-aw’) and means “an offence (sometimes habitual sinfulness), and its penalty.”</p> <p><i>God is using the broader word, “sin,” in His offer to forgive the wicked ways of His</i></p>

	<p><i>people, including any violation of His law, provided that they truly repent and turn away from habitually repeating their sins.</i> Paul addresses this in his letter to the Romans: “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that <i>our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.</i>” (Romans 6:4-7, <i>Emphasis Added</i>)</p>
<p>and</p>	<p>Reuse of “and” as a conjunction, linking the three action verbs “hear,” “forgive,” and “heal.”</p>
<p>heal</p>	<p>“Heal” is a verb that means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “to make free from injury or disease : to make sound or whole” • “to make well again, to restore to health” • “to cause (an undesirable condition) to be overcome, mend • “to patch up or correct (a breach or division)” • “to restore to original purity or integrity (healed of sin)” <p>The Hebrew word for “heal” is “rapha” (pronounced, raw-faw’) and means “to mend (by stitching), to cure, (cause to) heal, repair, and make whole.”</p> <p>The dominant use of “heal” in the Bible is regarding individuals with physical ailments being made well. But there are other uses of the word in the Old Testament that are relevant to understanding what God is offering in 2 Chronicle 7:14:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 32:39 – “Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.” • Psalm 41:4 – “I said, ‘LORD, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.’” • Psalm 60:2 – “You have made the earth tremble; You have broken it; heal its breaches, for it is shaking.” • Isaiah 19:22 – “And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.” • Isaiah 61:1 – “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;” • Jeremiah 3:22 – “Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” “Indeed we do come to You, for You are the LORD our God.” • Lamentations 2:13 – “How shall I console you? To what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your ruin is spread wide as the sea; who can heal you?” • Hosea 6:1 – “Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.” • Hosea 14:4 – “I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely, for My anger has

	<p>turned away from him.”</p> <p><i>When God healed a physical ailment in the Bible, it was a complete healing. The implication of God using the word “heal” for other types of healings is that they are also comprehensive and complete restorations of well-being.</i></p>
<p>their</p>	<p>In this third use of “their,” God is referring to His people regarding the place where they live.</p>
<p>land.</p>	<p>“Land” in this context means “a portion of the earth's solid surface distinguishable by boundaries or ownership, country, realm, and domain.” It is often attributed to a person or people. The Hebrew word for “land” is “eres” (pronounced, eh’-rets) and means “the earth, land, country, field, ground, nations, wilderness, and world.” <i>The overwhelming use of “land” in the Bible is when referring to a nation comprised of a group of people that possess a physical area, such as “the land of Egypt,” belonging to the Egyptians.</i></p> <p><i>There are strongly worded verses about a land being defiled and polluted by the wickedness of its inhabitants, especially when God’s people are the perpetrators. The following is a sampling of relevant verses that align with the United States and the current wickedness in our land.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Our starting point as a nation with a vibrant Christian heritage, ethics, and culture: Deuteronomy 8:7-10 – “For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.”</p> <p>• The effect of abhorrent sexual sins listed in Leviticus 18:6-25, including incest, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality: Leviticus 18:26-27 – “You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit <i>any</i> of these abominations, <i>either</i> any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who <i>were</i> before you, and thus the land is defiled),”</p> <p>Jeremiah 23:10 – “For the land is full of adulterers; for because of a curse the land mourns. The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up. Their course of life is evil, and their might is not right.”</p> <p>• The effects of shedding innocent blood through abortion, child sacrifice, and other forms of murder: Psalm 106:35-40 – “But they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was</p>

	<p>polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds. Therefore the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance.”</p> <p>Numbers 35:33-34 (Regarding murder) – “So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.’ ”</p> <p>Ezekiel 7:22-23 – “I will turn My face from them, and they will defile My secret place; for robbers shall enter it and defile it. Make a chain, for the land is filled with crimes of blood and the city is full of violence.”</p> <p>Ezekiel 36:18 – Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of worshipping other gods: Deuteronomy 11:16-17 – “Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD’S anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.” <p>To embrace and pursue God’s “this for that” offer that results in our land being healed is a daunting challenge. <i>The actions required by Christians in our nation are clear. We must humble ourselves, and pray and seek God’s face, and actually turn from our wicked ways.</i></p> <p>This is easily said, but difficult for a nation to do, even when the required action and changes are limited to God’s people.</p> <p>Note: <i>God allowed the Babylonians led by King Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Solomon’s Temple in 586 BC as a result of the unrepentant wickedness of His people as they forsook Him and worshipped other gods.</i></p>
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How many Christians must respond for God to heal the United States?

It is not clear in God’s offer how many (or what percent) of His people must respond in order for Him to heal our land. For example, when God revealed to Abraham that Sodom, where his nephew Lot lived, was about to be destroyed because of the grave sin of the people, Abraham interceded for the righteous in the city. As a result, God agreed to spare the city of Sodom if just 10 righteous people could be found in it (see Genesis 18:16-32). Finding only the four members of Lot’s family, both Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

Daniel Chapter 9 records Daniel's elegant prayer of supplication with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes regarding seventy years of desolations prophesied by Jeremiah. God sent the angel, Gabriel, to explain that there would be seventy weeks of years of desolations, but He did not reduce the number of years.

In contrast, Jonah 3: 2-10 reports that the large city of Nineveh was spared by God because the entire city, including the king of Nineveh, repented from their evil when warned by God through Jonah's preaching:

Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 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.

There is one additional life and death observation that cannot be ignored about God's offer to His people in the United States, or any other land or nation. Not everyone that claims to be a Christian is known by Jesus:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23, Emphasis Added)

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains that we cannot earn our salvation through works:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:4-9, Emphasis Added)

Works alone in the name of Jesus, without a personal relationship through faith in Jesus and accepting Him as one's Savior and Lord, is an eternally fatal choice. Proudful claims of works without faith in Jesus are of no value. Jesus makes this even clearer in John 10:27 – "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

The 2 Chronicles 7:14 implication is that the voice and actions of such a person will not count in a nation's response to God's offer to "My people called by My name" to heal their land.

Path Forward – Choices to Make "Mission Impossible" Possible

For God to heal the deep divisions in the United States, significantly more than ten Christians will likely be required to humble themselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn from their wicked ways. In the meantime, is it not amazing that God has been activating Christians in many nations to pray for the United States during these troubling times.

The challenge and question confronting Christians in the United States is can we respond similar to the citizens of Nineveh? In simple terms, it's a decision with actions that we each must make as individuals and as groups of God's people.

These are actions to consider and choose to move forward with the stipulations required for God to heal our land:

1. For God's people to mount an acceptable response to God's standing "this for that" offer, we must choose to have faith and believe that God's offer still applies and is possible.
2. As individuals we must exercise our faith and freedom of choice, and personally humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn from our own wicked ways.
3. To mount a national response that gets God's attention, we must believe what Jesus told His disciples: "But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26 and Mark 10:27)
4. The explicit implication is that we as God's people must ask Him to further energize His people, His remnant, across the United States to personally humble themselves, pray, seek God's presence, and turn from their own wicked ways.
5. We must ask Him to counsel us through His Holy Spirit regarding actions we are to take to rally a national response, and do what He says.
6. We must also believe that because God is a God of restoration and truly desires that the United States will again be "one Nation under God," He is already proactively taking actions that will prompt His people to enter into His "this for that" proposition.
7. We must thank God that He has a remnant of people called by His name that know Him and He knows them. We must pray for each other as we engage in the offer and its required actions.

"God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 'LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life'? But what does the divine response say to him? 'I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men

who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” (Romans 11:2-5)

8. We must pray for our fellow citizens that have not accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, asking that they would encounter God and choose eternal life instead of death before it is too late. *But more than pray, we must faithfully share with them the good news of Jesus Christ.*

A closing thought about the Path Forward: It’s tempting to believe that we need a national Christian leadership team to coordinate the “path forward” actions across the United States. An alternate perspective is for each of us to ask and trust God through the power and presence of His Holy Spirit to coordinate the actions of individual Christians and local Christian communities to humble ourselves, pray, seek God’s face, and turn from our wicked ways.

Selah (“Pause and think on these things.”)