

106.1 Making a Comeback #1: Wake Up

Americans love a good comeback story. You may remember that the Chrysler Corporation made one of the biggest comebacks in the history of the business world.

- After posting a 17 million dollar profit in its first year in 1924 and remaining viable throughout the Great Depression in 1979, financial problems threatened its existence.
- They hired **Lee Iacocca** from Ford and, with the help of the Federal Government, secured a 1.5 billion dollar loan and tax incentives. They introduced several new cars, including the mini-van, and returned the convertible to production.
- Their comeback was so strong that they repaid their loan in three years, purchased American Motors, the maker of Jeep and the fourth largest car manufacturer in the U.S., and merged with Daimler-Benz, best known for its Mercedes Benz cars.

What a comeback!

The Israelis of the Bible were no different than we are. They knew God, received His blessings, and then turned away from Him. He cursed them for their disobedience, as He had promised. After the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews made a comeback to their land and asked, “Does God still love us?” An honest American will realize we have fallen into the same pattern and wonder if God still cares for our country. The answer to both questions is “yes.” He loves Israel, America, and all nations. He holds a special place for all who seek Him.

Some Americans are awake to our apostasy and want to return to the Lord. Others don’t understand but are in the process of waking up, realizing something is wrong. Still, others are in a deep sleep and clueless about the realities of God’s discipline of nations. As they “feel the pinch,” they will start waking up to the consequences of a God-abandoned life, but not until then.

God confronts His people in the book of Malachi regarding some of their questions. There are applications for Christian Americans who realize a problem and want to fix it. The prophet gives us insight into this spiritual – not political – dilemma. BTW, a new President or a better political party is not the answer. God is the solution, and we mustn’t forget Him. We must actively and sincerely return to Him to regain His blessings. Listen to **Malachi 3:7** (NKJV):

“Yet from the days of your fathers you have turned away from My statutes *and* ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. “But you say, ‘How shall we return?’

Returning to God is more than attending church services. It is developing a biblical worldview for every part of our lives. Observant Jews practice Paul’s exhortation to “pray without ceasing” (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**). This could mean having regular prayer times, maintaining a lifestyle of prayer, or finding reasons to pray throughout the day. If you look for them, you will find numerous reasons for blessing God with your prayers. The Jews have prayers for rising in the morning, fragrant aromas, the sound of birds, employment, meals, family, and even being able to go to the restroom! When you are so God-conscious that you pray throughout the day, you will learn to include Him in every activity and decision.

Don’t forget to include the element of sincerity, as we can say prayers without praying. Moses and Jesus teach us how to love God in **Deuteronomy 6:5** and **Matthew 22:37**. They said to love God with ALL our hearts, souls, and might, and Jesus added “mind.” We are to hold nothing back and love Him the same way He loves us, fully and completely. God holds nothing back from His love for us, including His Son. **Romans 8:31-32** (NKJV):

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Early Americans believed in God and believed they owed God their devotion. They displayed it by committing their lives to Him. **James Madison** was the architect of the Constitution and our fourth President. He stated:

"It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage....Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe."

The **Pilgrims'** providential voyage to America aimed to "advance the Christian faith," according to the Mayflower Compact. Throughout the American Revolution, Americans depended on God and prayed regularly for His intervention, and He answered. Shortly after hostilities ceased, they began to forget Him. **Benjamin Franklin** called on the **Constitutional Convention** to return to God in his famous speech advocating for prayer during the delegates' difficulties developing consensus for the Constitution. You remember his words from 1787:

Mr. President,

The small progress we have made after 4 or five weeks close attendance & continual reasonings with each other---our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing as many noes as ays, is methinks a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the Human Understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running about in search of it. . . . In this situation of this Assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings?

In the beginning of the Contest with G. Britain, when we were sensible of danger we had daily prayer in this room for the divine protection.-Our prayers, Sir, were heard, & they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending providence in our favor.

To that kind providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance?

I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth that God Governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?

We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that "except the Lord build the House they labour in vain that build it." I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better, than the Builders of Babel: . . .

I therefore beg leave to move-that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy of this City be requested to officiate in that Service.

The delegates returned to God and then their work thanks to Dr. Franklin's providentially-prompted speech.

You see the modern pattern. Like Israel in its prosperity, America has forgotten God and needs to return to Him. Remember what God promises in our text, "Return to me, and I will return to you."

Keep The Light of *Waking Up and Returning to God* Burning!

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