

THE MISUSE OF II CHRONICLES 7:14

by K. R. Blades

This article touches upon the issue of the *healing of our land* that is often spoken about in the Kingdom Now teaching and Dominion Theology that is so popular today. The basic tenet of this teaching is that it is the church's responsibility to bring in God's kingdom on this earth. Israel failed to do that and the church is failing to do it now. Proponents of the doctrine contend that Christ is waiting for Christians to take control in the nations and lands where they are and to establish His kingdom on this earth. It is even sometimes stated that the return of Christ to the earth is directly tied to the church fulfilling its obligation to bring in the kingdom. It is obvious that such a teaching as this has no understanding or appreciation for the dispensation of God's grace that is now in effect and for the "mystery of Christ" that was revealed unto Paul. Nor does this teaching appreciate God's immutable covenanted relationship to Israel and the resumption and fulfillment of Israel's program yet to come. In connection with this unfortunate teaching it is often declared that our nations and lands suffer because of the failure of Christians to be serious about their responsibility. In view of this a particular verse of Scripture, II Chronicles 7:14, is often quoted and held out as a promise that Christians should claim and act upon. The misuse and abuse of II Chronicles 7:14 is the subject of this article.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (II Chronicles 7:14)

If over the course of the last several years I totaled up the number of times I have heard someone admonish Christians today to do what II Chronicles 7:14 says to do, I think the number would be in the hundreds, if not thousands. It seems as if this verse has become a watch-word, or motto, among a great number of Christians today. And indeed it has. They see the sin and evil that permeates our society. They see the degradation that is taking place in all facets of our culture. They see the reluctance and often times downright unwillingness of those in the positions of authority to do anything about it. In being confronted with all of this there is a natural desire to see the course of our nation turned around, and for righteousness and justice to hold sway, along with peace and prosperity. And what is being taught to Christians today is that we can have those very things and turn the course of our nation around. We are told that what we need to do is claim God's promise of II Chronicles 7:14 in order to remedy our national plight. We need to realize that we have been remiss as Christians, having failed to do what God has told us to do, and we need to act upon God's promise to heal our land as set forth in II Chronicles 7:14. In view of this, multitudes of Christians today are seeking a national turn-around and asking God to fulfill His promise to us of *healing our land*. But, sincere desires for a better society notwithstanding, that's a very unfortunate thing. This is because the challenge of II Chronicles 7:14 is NOT a challenge to us today. The promise of the verse is NOT a promise to us today. The program under which God says those words is NOT the program He has in effect today. Rather, the program was God's dealings with Israel. The promise of II Chronicles 7:14 was to them as His nation in covenant relationship with Him. And the challenge was one God gave them, which if they responded to, would cause the curses they were experiencing to cease; which curses they were experiencing for their failures under the law. Hence, by failing to "rightly divide the word of truth," multitudes of Christians today are asking God to fulfil a

promise that He has not made to us. They are being made to think that God is treating us today the same way in which He treated Israel. And they are being made to take Israel's promises and claim them as applicable to us today. This is truly unfortunate and is wrong.

Today we live in "the dispensation of the grace of God for us Gentiles." God's program with Israel is temporarily set aside during this present dispensation. The "new creation," the church the body of Christ, is what God is forming now, and it is NOT a nation with a land on this earth. Instead, the body of Christ has a citizenship in heaven and is awaiting the Lord's return to gather us together unto Himself and to take us into the heavenly places. Neither are we today, in this dispensation of grace, being treated by God like He treated Israel. He has not put us under the law today, but we are under grace. We are not nationally, nor individually, blessed or cursed today depending upon our performance under the law. But such was not the case with Israel in time past. Israel is God's nation. They were under the law. It was the covenant they entered into with God. They were given a land that would be cursed under the curses of the law, if they did not comply with it, but blessed if they did comply. However, comply they did not, and so their land was cursed. It is to that situation that the challenge and promise of II Chronicles 7:14 applies.

A brief examination of the context of II Chronicles 7:14, along with an appreciation for their history up until that time, will show that the challenge and promise is to Israel in their covenant relationship to the Lord. It has nothing whatsoever to do with us today.

In the verse that precedes verse 14, the Lord declared to Solomon,...

"If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;..." (II Chronicles 7:13)

That the Lord might very well do these things is something Solomon knew quite well. The law contract called for God to curse Israel's land if they persisted in their contrariness and rebelliousness to Him. The general listing of the curses for non-compliance with the law was set forth in Deuteronomy 28, and the progressive way in which the curses would be experienced by the nation was outlined in Leviticus 26. Solomon knew all of this and also knew that the nation had already been experiencing the first course of those curses for its disobedience and rebelliousness. He also knew that, just as the law contract called for, if the nation spurned the mercy and grace shown to them during his father David's reign and now his, that the "If I shut up heaven...etc.," would not simply be a possibility, but would be the reality for Israel. They would begin experiencing these further chastisements of the Lord upon their land that the law demanded.

The Lord's touching of Israel's land was part of the law contract that they had with God. It was not something that God did arbitrarily, nor was it just the natural result of unrighteousness on their part, as if they were being treated by God no different from any other people. Instead, afflicting their land was a contracted and prescribed curse that they would have to endure for their failures under the law. It was a curse they knew about before they ever entered into the land, and it was a curse they began to experience not long after they entered in. Israel's land was made sick by God cursing it in accordance with the terms of the Law and it could only be healed by Israel following the prescription for its healing set forth in that same Law contract.

Hence, the contracted curses were not the product of capriciousness on God's part. They had a design to them. As is set forth in Leviticus 26, God was chastising His people with them. His desire through the use of them was to get Israel to "hearken unto Him," to be "reproved by Him," to no longer "walk contrary" unto Him. Therefore, He waited, as the merciful God that He is, for them to be exercised by the chastening and to "humble themselves" and "seek Him." If, and when they did that, as the Lord set forth in the law, He would not proceed on with the curses, but would bless them in their land, just as the contract called for.

This is what the challenge, promise, and program of II Chronicles 7:14 is all about. What the Lord declared in that "If-Then" proposition to Israel was just what the law covenant contracted for. But in this present dispensation of God's grace it is not the way He is dealing with the church the body of Christ today, nor any nation.

As the record of God's word shows, Israel's history was one of persisting in disobedience and rebelliousness, and she did come under the subsequent curses of the law. Her land was not healed and it awaits the day when God resumes His program and dealings with her. The blessings of the Law contract cannot be procured by Israel based upon her performance. She will only be blessed when God saves her and heals her land based solely upon His "Jehovah-ness" and grace.

Today, in this dispensation of God's grace, the program of God is different. God is not cursing our land, or blessing it, as if He was treating us like Israel. In fact, He's given the body of Christ no land on this earth, nor has He made us into a nation. He's made no promise to us to bless the lands or nations we dwell in. Instead, quite the contrary is the case. The nations of this world deserve nothing less than the outpouring of God's wrath. Wrath is what they have already merited. Yet, instead of deserved wrath, God is being long-suffering and holding back the curse of His wrath this world is so richly deserving. He has put in temporary abeyance His program with Israel, through whom the blessing of the world will come. And instead of either right now cursing or blessing this world, He is by the gospel of His grace forming the "new creation," the church the body of Christ, for an inheritance with Christ in the heavenly places. And in accordance with this He has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Our realm of blessing is in the heavenly places, and the *land*, so to speak, in which we will be a blessing is the heavenly places.

Right now, while God is longsuffering and we are in this world awaiting the coming of Christ to gather us together unto Himself, we will experience and be affected by the rise and decline of nations. But God has not contracted with us to be for the blessing or cursing of any land, or to bring in His kingdom on this earth. That contract relationship belongs to Israel, and only Israel. They will fulfill it when God resumes His program with them, after this dispensation of His grace is over.