

Heal Our Hearts, Heal Our Land

by Brian L. Martin

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... if my people who are called by my name 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. (2 Chron 7:14)

THE FOLLOWING IS FROM Herbert Lockyer's *All the Prayers of the Bible*. This is Moses' prayer for Israel after the golden calf incident, along with Lockyer's commentary. I believe that both the prayer and the commentary can be readily applied to the United States of America, in which most of our readership resides, and most likely to any other country in which you may be reading this. Consider prayerfully Lockyer's claim that "too few of us are willing and ready to stand in the gap."

Prayer for Delay of Deserved Judgment

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin –; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. (Exodus 32:31-32, KJV)

What another tribute to Moses, as the incomparable prophet-intercessor, this distressing and profoundly moving chapter affords! How he could pray for an apostate people in language reaching unparalleled heights of self-sacrificial devotion! (See also Deuteronomy 9: 26-29.) On the Mount, the place of intercession, Moses pleaded for Israel. In spite of Israel's revolt against God and their disloyalty to Moses, he stepped into the breach, as God encouraged his servant to plead for others. Too few of us are willing and ready to stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30). With what passion Paul could plead for his kinsmen according to the flesh (Romans 10:1)!

The righteous wrath of Moses was permissible (32:19-20). It was righteous indignation, the anger of a good man. There was nothing mean nor petty about it. "Only he who loves much knows what it is like to feel that anger which is ennobling and godlike." The most moving prayer in the Bible is the incomplete prayer of Moses: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin –" Why the dash in this sentence? Why is it

broken and incomplete? Was there a break in the voice of Moses, as his confession and intercession for a sinning people produced a momentary silence? “Here was a prayer with the Cross at its very heart.” ✝