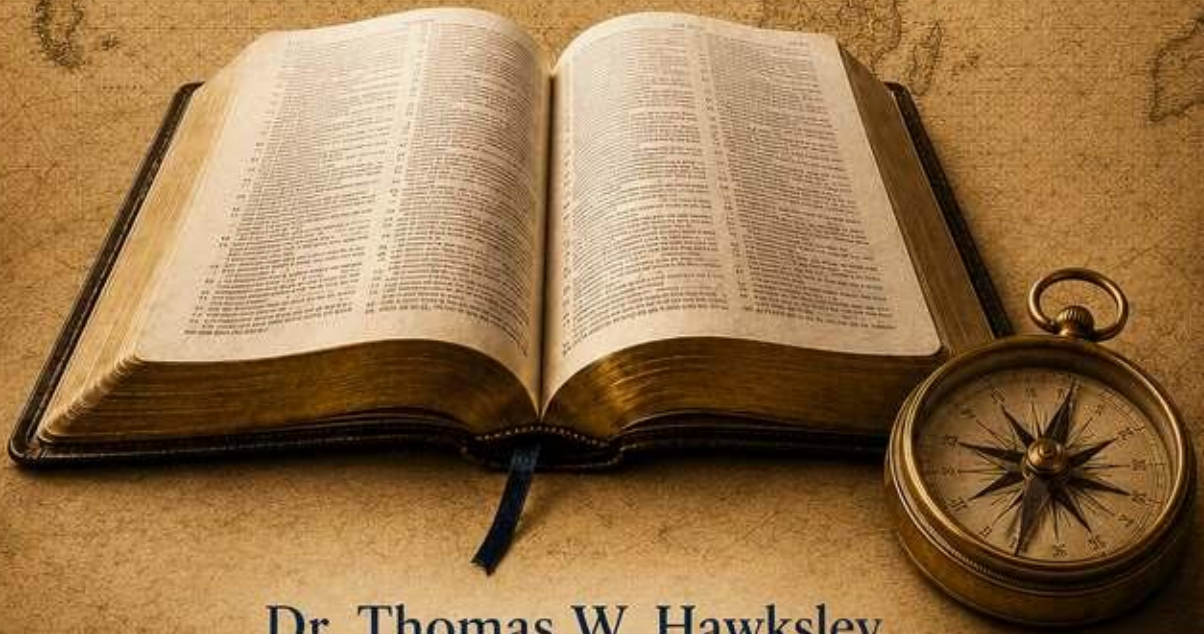


REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

AMERICA IN THE BIBLE?

IS AMERICA ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE?



Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

www.ReasonTogether.Church

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

America in the Bible

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Bring your questions. Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Aloha.

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

Whether you worship with us regularly or whether this is your first time with us, I am grateful that you are here.

At Reason Together Church, you do not have to hide your questions.

You do not have to pretend that you have already figured everything out.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let us Reason Together the Word of God.

If you are our guest today, we are especially honored by your presence.

Our guest card asks for only your first name and your email address.

We are not asking you to surrender your life history before you have finished your first cup of coffee.

We simply want to thank you for being with us and let you know what is happening at Reason Together Church.

After our time together, I hope you will join us at the Reason Together Cafe.

The coffee is free.

The conversations are free.

And there are free refills on both.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word.

Thank You that Your Word is true when the world is confused, steady when nations are shaken and eternal when kingdoms rise and fall.

As we open the Bible today, keep us from forcing our assumptions into the text.

Give us the humility to accept what You have said, the wisdom to recognize what You have not said and the courage to obey what You have clearly commanded.

Help us to love our neighbors and be grateful for our country without allowing any earthly allegiance to take the place that belongs to Jesus Christ alone.

Call Your church to repentance.

Extend mercy to the people of this nation.

And let everything said today point beyond every temporary kingdom to the everlasting kingdom of our Lord.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Our opening Scripture is found in Acts chapter 17, beginning with verse 24.

The King James Version says:

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

"Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

Before we talk about America, notice what the Bible has already told us about every nation.

God made the world.

God gives life and breath.

God made all nations of one blood.

God appointed their times.

God determined the bounds of their habitation.

And God did it so that human beings would seek Him.

America is already included in that truth.

Before we go any further, let me say a brief word about giving.

We do not pass an offering plate at Reason Together Church.

If you are visiting, you are never expected to give.

If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to support your home church faithfully.

For those who consider Reason Together Church their church home, a giving box is available in the back.

Give only as the Lord leads you, because God loves a cheerful giver.

Now let us warm up to today's question.

Have you ever noticed that a map often looks different depending upon where it was printed?

On a map printed in America, our part of the world is usually placed prominently.

On maps printed in other parts of the world, the arrangement may look different.

People naturally place their own location near the center of the picture.

That is not always arrogance.

Sometimes it is simply familiarity.

We begin with where we are.

But we can bring that same habit to Biblical prophecy.

America has exercised enormous political, military, economic and cultural influence.

So when Americans open the prophetic books, we expect to find America somewhere near the center of the map.

We find Israel.

We find Egypt.

We find Babylon.

We find Persia, Greece and Rome within the great prophetic movements of Daniel.

Then we begin searching for ourselves.

We look for an eagle.

We look for wings.

We look for a young lion.

We look for a distant coastland.

We look for a rich commercial empire.

And if we search long enough, we may find something that sounds familiar.

But the Bible's prophetic map is not centered on Washington.

It is centered on God's redemptive purposes, His dealings with Israel and ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ.

So our question today is simple.

Is America anywhere in the Bible?

I want to answer that question carefully.

I do not want to dismiss every idea before we examine it.

I also do not want to call speculation Scripture.

There are at least four different things we might mean when we ask whether America is in the Bible.

First, is America explicitly named?

The answer is no.

The words America, United States and Washington do not appear in the Bible.

That fact alone does not settle everything.

The modern country and its modern name did not exist when the Biblical books were written.

Second, is America unmistakably represented by some other prophetic name or symbol?

After examining the proposed passages, I do not believe any passage can be demonstrated with confidence to refer specifically to the United States.

Third, could America be included among distant lands, islands and coastlands?

Yes.

America can be included generically without being individually identified.

Fourth, is America included whenever the Bible addresses all nations?

Certainly.

America may be absent as a name, but America is never absent from God's authority.

That distinction is important.

Sometimes people hear, "America is not clearly named in prophecy," and they think that means the Bible has nothing to say to America.

It means nothing of the kind.

The Bible addresses America whenever it says that righteousness exalteth a nation.

The Bible addresses America whenever it says that God rules in the kingdom of men.

The Bible addresses America whenever it commands the gospel to be preached to every nation.

The Bible addresses America whenever it says that kings and rulers are accountable to the Son.

The Bible addresses America whenever it says that all nations will stand before God.

America does not need to be separately named to be completely accountable.

Why, then, does the Bible identify some nations and not others?

Because the Bible is not attempting to provide an encyclopedia of every country that will ever exist.

It is not an advance copy of a modern political atlas.

It is the revelation of God and His plan of redemption.

Nations enter the Biblical record because they interact with Israel, Jerusalem, the covenant people, the coming Messiah, the spread of the gospel or God's work of judgment and restoration. And America is not uniquely absent.

Canada is not unmistakably identified.

Australia is not unmistakably identified.

Brazil, Mexico, Japan and Indonesia are not unmistakably identified.

Most modern countries cannot be pointed to with certainty in a particular prophetic passage.

America's absence is not a strange prophetic hole that must be filled.

It is what we should expect from a book that never promised to name every modern government.

Job 12:23 says of God:

"He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again."

Isaiah 40:15 says:

"Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance."

Daniel 4:17 says:

"The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

A nation can be extremely important in our time without occupying a separately named place in prophecy.

Nevertheless, several proposed passages deserve a fair hearing.

Let us begin with the isles.

Isaiah frequently speaks to the isles and distant coastlands.

Isaiah 42:4 says:

"The isles shall wait for his law."

Isaiah 49:1 says:

"Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far."

Isaiah 51:5 says:

"The isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust."

Living on Oahu, our ears should perk up whenever the King James Bible speaks of the isles.

We live on islands far across the sea from the land of Israel.

And these passages contain wonderful news.

The Word of God would not remain locked within one small geographical region.

The salvation of God would reach distant people.

The law of the Lord would be heard across the waters.

The islands would learn to trust in His arm.

Could America be included among those distant lands and coastlands?

Yes.

Could Hawaii be included?

Yes.

Could many other distant lands be included?

Yes.

But that is precisely the point.

The passage reaches us without isolating us.

The isles may include us, but they do not identify us.

Another proposed passage is Isaiah chapter 18.

The King James Version begins:

"Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia."

Some have said that the wings represent the American eagle.

Others have said that the wings represent American aircraft.

Others have looked at the description of a powerful distant people and concluded that it must be the United States.

But the chapter itself places the oracle in relation to Cush, translated Ethiopia in the King James Version.

It speaks of rivers, ambassadors and vessels of bulrushes within that world.

Nothing in the chapter mentions the bald eagle.

Nothing mentions airplanes.

Nothing describes the American form of government.

A word picture that reminds us of America is not the same thing as a text that identifies America.

Similarity is not identity.

That rule becomes even more important when animals appear in prophecy.

Daniel 7:4 says:

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked."

A popular interpretation says the lion is Great Britain because Britain uses a lion as a national symbol.

The eagle's wings are then said to be America because America uses the eagle.

The wings being plucked are interpreted as American independence from Britain.

It sounds clever.

It sounds even more convincing when national emblems are placed beside the verse.

But Daniel does not describe two nations.

He describes one beast that has wings.

The wings do not become another beast.

They do not sail across an ocean and write a declaration of independence.

The first beast belongs to a sequence of kingdoms that parallels the sequence in Daniel chapter 2.

The first kingdom in that setting is Babylon.

The interpretation based on Britain and America begins with modern symbols and reads them backward into Daniel.

That is not how Biblical interpretation should work.

The United States adopted the bald eagle as a national emblem long after Daniel wrote.

That later decision cannot determine what Daniel saw centuries earlier.

The same caution applies to Revelation 12:14:

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place."

Some have said this is America protecting or transporting Israel.

But the Bible already used this image long before the United States existed.

In Exodus 19:4, God said to Israel:

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."

In Deuteronomy 32, God describes His care like an eagle stirring up her nest, fluttering over her young, spreading her wings and carrying them.

Revelation is drawing upon the Bible's own language of divine deliverance and protection.

We must allow Scripture to interpret its symbols before we consult modern flags, seals and emblems.

An eagle in the Bible is not automatically America.

A lion in the Bible is not automatically Britain.

A bear in the Bible is not automatically Russia.

A dragon in the Bible is not automatically China.

Modern national mascots do not control ancient prophecy.

Another proposal comes from Ezekiel 38:13.

The verse says:

"Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil?"

Some identify Tarshish as Britain.

They then understand the young lions as nations descended from Britain.

America becomes the greatest of those young lions.

Therefore, they conclude that America appears in Ezekiel as a nation questioning the invasion of Israel.

There are several difficulties.

The exact location of Tarshish is disputed.

Its Biblical identity as a distant maritime trading center does not prove it is Britain.

The expression rendered "young lions" has been understood in several ways.

Translations speak of young lions, leaders, warriors or villages.

Even if we accept the King James wording, the text does not say former colonies.

And even if we assume colonies, the text does not specify America.

The proposed interpretation requires us to place one uncertain conclusion on top of another.

Tarshish must be Britain.

Young lions must mean colonies.

The colonies must include America in a special way.

And their question must describe a future American role.

That may be an interesting possibility.

It is not Biblical certainty.

There is another important detail.

The nations in the verse ask whether the invader has come to take spoil.

The verse does not say they successfully intervene.

It records a question, not necessarily a rescue.

We should never build more upon a verse than the verse can carry.

Then we come to the beast arising from the earth in Revelation chapter 13.

Some interpreters, particularly within the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, identify that beast as the United States.

The argument usually says the beast arises from the earth rather than the sea because America arose in a relatively sparsely populated part of the world.

Its two lamb-like horns are interpreted as republican government and religious liberty.

Later it speaks like a dragon, representing a future American betrayal of those principles.

We should describe that view fairly.

But the text does not define the earth as North America.

It does not identify the two horns as republicanism and religious liberty.

It does not name the United States.

The interpretation depends upon a historical system brought to the passage rather than an identity established by the passage.

It is a recognized denominational interpretation.

It is not a conclusion every reader is required to reach from the words of Revelation.

Now we come to the most powerful proposed identification.

Is America Mystery Babylon?

Revelation chapters 17 and 18 describe Babylon as wealthy, influential, immoral and deeply connected with worldwide commerce.

The kings of the earth participate in her corruption.

The merchants of the earth become rich through her excess.

Her luxury affects the world.

Her fall is sudden.

Merchants and shipmasters mourn because their market has disappeared.

When Americans read those words, it is not difficult to see similarities.

America has enormous economic influence.

American culture travels around the world.

American consumption affects distant producers and merchants.

American entertainment can export both creativity and corruption.

American wealth can become a source of generosity, but it can also become a source of pride.

So does America resemble some of Babylon's characteristics?

Yes.

Does resemblance prove identity?

No.

The first readers of Revelation would have recognized Rome in much of Babylon's imagery.

Rome ruled over kings.

Rome enriched merchants.

Rome persecuted believers.

Rome embodied an idolatrous political and economic order.

Other interpreters understand Babylon as the larger godless world system that appears in different forms throughout history and reaches its final expression before Christ returns.

Some futurists expect a revived city or system connected with historical Babylon.

Those interpretations can be examined and debated.

But none allows us simply to replace the word Babylon with America because several descriptions sound familiar.

Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51 are also used in the America-as-Babylon argument.

Jeremiah calls Babylon "the hammer of the whole earth."

He describes her power, wealth and sudden destruction.

Some point to the expression "the hindermost of the nations" and say that America appeared late in history.

Others point to an enemy coming from the north and construct a future invasion of America.

But Jeremiah repeatedly identifies his subject.

He names Babylon.

He names the land of the Chaldeans.

He names Bel and Merodach.

He names the Medes.

He connects Babylon's fall with Israel and Judah returning.

Whatever future dimensions someone may find in those prophecies, the text does not invite us to erase Babylon's name and insert our own.

There is a better way to apply these chapters.

America may be Babylon-like without being Babylon.

America can imitate Babylon's pride.

America can participate in Babylon's materialism.

America can export Babylon's immorality.

America can trust in Babylon's wealth.

And the church can live inside that system while slowly learning to love what Babylon sells.

Revelation 18 therefore asks us something more personal than whether America is Babylon.

Has Babylon entered us?

Do we mourn the loss of wealth more than the loss of righteousness?

Are we more frightened by economic decline than spiritual decline?

Do we measure blessing entirely by what we can purchase?

Have we confused comfort with the favor of God?

The danger is not only that we might misidentify America as Babylon.

The danger is that we might condemn Babylon while quietly loving everything Babylon sells.

Resemblance can support application.

Resemblance cannot establish identity.

Another claim identifies America with the tribe of Manasseh.

Genesis 48:19 says that Manasseh would become a people and would be great, while Ephraim would become a multitude of nations.

British-Israel teaching identifies Britain as Ephraim, the multitude of nations, and America as Manasseh, the one great nation.

But where is the genealogy?

Where is the Biblical migration connecting the tribe of Manasseh to the American people?

Where is the reliable historical evidence?

The fact that America became a great nation does not make America Manasseh.

Many peoples have been great.

Many empires have held colonies.

Similar language does not establish ancestry.

Greatness is not genealogy.

This is not a harmless identification.

Once America is declared to be Israel, Israel's promises are transferred to America.

Israel's covenant is transferred to America.

American success becomes proof of divine election.

American policy can then be treated as though it carries Biblical authority.

Scripture does not authorize that move.

America is not Israel.

The American church is part of Christ's church, but the United States government is not the covenant nation of Israel.

What about writings outside the Biblical canon?

The most interesting claim comes from Second Esdras chapters 11 and 12.

Second Esdras appears in the Apocrypha of some Bible traditions, including historical editions associated with the King James Bible, but it is not part of the Protestant canon.

It describes a frightening eagle with twelve wings, additional smaller wings and three heads.

Modern interpreters sometimes match the wings and heads with American presidents.

Charts are produced.

Administrations are counted.

Political events are fitted to feathers and heads.

But Second Esdras gives its own explanation.

Second Esdras 12:11 says:

"The eagle, whom thou sawest come up from the sea, is the kingdom which was seen in the vision of thy brother Daniel."

The work arose in a world oppressed by Rome.

The eagle was Rome's imperial emblem.

The vision concerns the oppressive kingdom connected with Daniel, not a sequence of American elections almost two thousand years later.

And there is a practical warning.

When every election forces an interpreter to recount the feathers, change which president counts or revise the predicted ending, the chart is controlling the prophecy rather than the prophecy controlling the chart.

A sequence that must be rewritten after every election is not a reliable interpretation of prophecy.

Second Esdras chapter 13 contains another tradition.

It says that the exiled tribes traveled to a remote region called Arzareth.

Some later interpreters identified that distant region with America.

But the passage says nothing about the Atlantic Ocean.

It says nothing about the Western Hemisphere.

It says nothing about Native Americans or the future United States.

The geography was supplied later.

The Book of Mormon contains far clearer claims about a prepared land across the waters, colonization and a land of liberty.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints understand many of those passages in relation to the Americas.

But that does not establish that America appears in the canonical Bible.

The Book of Mormon's authority depends upon accepting the claims of Joseph Smith in the nineteenth century.

It cannot serve as independent ancient confirmation of what Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel or Revelation meant.

We should also say something about modern dreams and private revelations.

Over the years, people have claimed visions of America divided, invaded, burned, impoverished or destroyed.

Some have claimed that God personally revealed America to be Babylon.

First Thessalonians 5 tells us not to despise prophesyings, but it also says:

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

First John 4:1 says:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."

A modern dream cannot establish a Biblical identity that the Biblical text does not establish.

We do not interpret Scripture by dream.

We test the dream by Scripture.

After examining the principal claims, we still have no passage that unmistakably identifies the United States.

Why, then, does the idea of a specially chosen America feel so natural to many Christians?

Part of the answer comes from American history.

In 1630, John Winthrop spoke to the Massachusetts Bay colonists about the kind of Christian community they were attempting to build.

Using the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 5, he said they would be as a city upon a hill.

The eyes of people would be upon them.

Their faithfulness or failure would be publicly visible.

Over time, that image was expanded.

It moved from a particular Christian community to the entire American nation.

America came to be described as a new Israel, a promised land or a nation with a unique redemptive mission.

There is much in American history for which we can thank God.

We can thank God for religious liberty.

We can thank God for churches that preached the gospel.

We can thank God for missionaries sent around the world.

We can thank God for believers who fought slavery, served the poor, built hospitals, opened schools and defended human dignity.

We can acknowledge national sins as well.

Gratitude does not require blindness.

Repentance does not require hatred.

But we must read Matthew 5 accurately.

Jesus told His disciples:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

The light is carried by Christ's people.

The light does not come from a constitution, a political party, a military or an economy.

Civil government can protect liberty.

Government can restrain evil.

Government can administer justice.

But government cannot regenerate a heart.

Government cannot preach the gospel.

Government cannot become the body of Christ.

America can be influenced by the Bible without becoming a nation promised by the Bible.

Here we need three careful distinctions.

Providence is not covenant.

Covenant is not prophecy.

Providence means that God rules history.

We may reasonably believe that God guided, restrained, blessed and used people and events in American history.

Every good gift comes from God.

Every opportunity for the gospel is an occasion for gratitude.

But providence does not equal covenant.

A covenant is not something a nation declares for itself.

God establishes His covenants and Scripture records them.

The Bible never records God making a national covenant with the United States comparable to His covenants with Israel.

And covenant is not prophecy.

Even if we recognize God's providential work in America, that does not prove America is secretly encoded in an eagle, a young lion or Babylon.

God's providence in American history does not create an American covenant or prove an American prophecy.

This brings us to one of the most frequently quoted verses in American churches.

Second Chronicles 7:14 says:

"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."

It is a beautiful verse.

It is the Word of God.

It teaches truths that the church desperately needs.

We should humble ourselves.

We should pray.

We should seek God's face.

We should turn from our wicked ways.

But we must also read verse 14 in its chapter.

God was responding to Solomon.

The temple had been dedicated.

The people were covenant Israel.

The land was the land God had covenanted to Israel.

The preceding verse speaks of God shutting heaven so there would be no rain, commanding locusts to devour the land or sending pestilence among His people.

Those were covenant judgments described in the law given to Israel.

The United States is not Solomon's Israel.

The Capitol is not the temple.

American territory is not Israel's covenant land.

Second Chronicles 7:14 does not guarantee that America will remain prosperous if enough Christians attend a prayer meeting.

It does not promise that the economy will recover.

It does not promise military security.

It does not promise that one election will heal the land.

It does not promise permanent superpower status.

But the verse still confronts God's people.

The church should humble itself.

The church should pray.

The church should seek God's face.

The church should turn from wickedness.

Too often we use the verse as a window through which we criticize everyone outside the church.

God intends it first to function as a mirror in which His people examine themselves.

Are we humble?

Are we praying?

Are we seeking His face or merely seeking influence?

Are we turning from our wicked ways or simply listing the wicked ways of somebody else?

We do not need to steal Israel's covenant in order to call America to repentance.

God gave us passages that speak directly about His dealings with nations and kingdoms.

Jeremiah 18, beginning with verse 7, says:

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

"If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

"And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;

"If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."

Notice the language.

A nation.

A kingdom.

If that nation turns from evil.

If a nation that has received good refuses God's voice.

God is sovereign over the rise, moral condition and fall of nations.

National blessing is not an entitlement.

National power is not self-created.

National prosperity is not permanent.

And national wickedness is not invisible to God.

Proverbs 14:34 says:

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

Not merely Israel.

Any people.

Righteousness matters.

Justice matters.

Truth matters.

The protection of life matters.

The treatment of the poor matters.

The integrity of rulers matters.

The faithfulness of families matters.

The conduct of the church matters.

Sin eventually sends its bill to individuals, families, churches and nations.

But is there an actual Biblical example of a wicked Gentile nation hearing a warning, repenting and receiving mercy?

Yes.

Nineveh.

Nineveh is a better model for America than pretending America is Israel.

Nineveh was powerful.

Nineveh was feared.

Nineveh was violent.

Nineveh was idolatrous.

Nineveh was outside Israel's covenant.

Nineveh had no promise that its greatness would continue.

God sent Jonah to preach.

Jonah did not want to go.

He did not want Nineveh forgiven.

He wanted Nineveh judged.

But Jonah 3:4 says:

"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

That was not a campaign slogan.

It was not flattering.

It did not tell Nineveh that it was too exceptional to fall.

It did not tell Nineveh that its military strength would protect it.

It did not tell Nineveh that past victories guaranteed future survival.

God exposed the city's condition and announced judgment.

Then something remarkable happened.

Jonah 3:5 says:

"So the people of Nineveh believed God."

They believed God.

The king arose from his throne.

He laid his robe aside.

He covered himself with sackcloth.

He called the people to cry mightily unto God.

And Jonah 3:8 records this command:

"Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands."

That is repentance.

Not merely feeling frightened.

Not merely holding a ceremony.

Not merely asking God to make the nation prosperous again.

They turned from evil.

They turned from violence.

Verse 10 says:

"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."

Nineveh did not possess Israel's covenant.

Nineveh received mercy because God is merciful toward repentant people.

This does not create a mechanical guarantee that every national revival will preserve a country forever.

Nineveh was eventually judged in a later generation.

But it proves that a wicked Gentile population is not beyond the reach of God's mercy.

America has no covenant guaranteeing national restoration.

Nineveh proves that national wickedness does not place people beyond God's mercy when they genuinely turn from evil.

There is another lesson in Jonah.

Jonah was angry that God showed mercy.

He went outside the city and waited to see what would happen.

He cared more about the plant that shaded him than the people who might perish.

God asked in Jonah 4:11:

"And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

The church must not become Jonah.

We must not sit outside the city hoping destruction will prove us right.

We must not become more excited about judgment headlines than gospel opportunities.

We must not speak about America's decline with secret satisfaction because it confirms our chart.

God cares about the people in the city.

God cares about the child who has never heard the gospel clearly.

God cares about the family falling apart.

God cares about the addict who believes there is no way home.

God cares about the lonely person surrounded by a crowd.

God cares about the immigrant, the veteran, the prisoner, the wealthy, the poor and the person sleeping on the sidewalk.

The message of judgment is meant to call people to repentance, not to entertain people who think they are safely outside its reach.

The church's mission is not to predict the city's destruction from a comfortable distance.

The church's mission is to carry the gospel into the city.

So what should Christians living in America do?

First, remember who the Bible calls the holy nation.

First Peter 2:9 says:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."

Peter was writing to believers scattered in different places.

The holy nation is not the United States.

It is the redeemed people of God drawn from earthly nations.

The church crosses borders.

It contains many languages, cultures and earthly citizenships.

Our unity is not a flag.

Our unity is Jesus Christ.

Second, practice faithful earthly citizenship.

Romans 13 teaches respect for lawful authority.

First Timothy 2 tells us to pray for kings and all who are in authority.

Jeremiah 29 told exiles to seek the peace of the city where they lived.

Christians should pray for leaders whether or not we voted for them.

We should obey lawful authority unless obedience would require disobedience to God.

We should seek justice.

We should defend the vulnerable.

We should tell the truth.

We should care for neighbors.

We should serve our communities.

We should use our freedoms for the gospel rather than merely consuming those freedoms for ourselves.

Third, keep earthly citizenship in its proper place.

Philippians 3:20 says:

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

We may love America.

We may thank God for America.

We may serve America.

We must never worship America.

No flag belongs where the cross belongs.

No president belongs where Christ belongs.

No party belongs where the kingdom of God belongs.

No nation, including America, is the Savior of the world.

Our hope is not that America will remain powerful forever.

Our hope is that the kingdom of Jesus Christ will remain forever.

Fourth, refuse to turn silence into prophecy.

Some teachers say America is absent from end-times prophecy because it will be destroyed by nuclear war.

Others say America will collapse economically.

Others say America will be absorbed into a larger alliance.

Others say the Rapture will remove so many believers that the country cannot function.

Others hope for a great national awakening.

Any of those events may be discussed as a possibility.

None can be proven by the mere absence of America's name.

Silence does not tell us which scenario occurred.

Absence is not a prophecy.

We should not claim that God revealed a detail merely because we developed a possible explanation for something He did not mention.

Fifth, fulfill America's certain place in the Great Commission.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

America is unquestionably one of those nations.

People in America need the gospel.

People living beside us need the gospel.

People arriving from across the world need the gospel.

And churches in America have the opportunity to send the gospel far beyond our shores.

Revelation 7:9 gives us the final picture:

"A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

There will be redeemed people from America in that multitude.

There will be redeemed people from nations America considered allies.

There will be redeemed people from nations America considered enemies.

The Lamb is gathering a people larger than any earthly nation.

That is our future.

That is our hope.

That is the kingdom that cannot fall.

So let us return to the question.

Is America anywhere in the Bible?

America is not explicitly named.

America is not unmistakably hidden in an eagle, a lion, a beast or a merchant empire.

America may be generically included among distant lands and coastlands.

America is certainly included whenever Scripture addresses all nations.

America exists under God's sovereignty.

America is accountable to God's righteousness.

America can experience the consequences of sin.

People in America may receive the mercy of God when they repent.

And America needs the gospel of Jesus Christ.

America may not be named on the prophetic map, but America is not outside the authority of God.

It stands beneath His rule.

It depends upon His mercy.

It needs the same Savior as every nation on earth.

But now I want to ask a question more important than whether America appears in a prophetic passage.

Is your name written in the Lamb's book of life?

Your passport cannot save you.

Your citizenship cannot forgive you.

Your patriotism cannot remove your sin.

Being born in a nation influenced by Christianity does not make you a Christian.

Attending church does not make you a child of God.

We have all sinned.

We have all fallen short of the glory of God.

The judgment we fear for nations begins with the truth that every individual must answer to God.

But God did not leave us without hope.

Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, came into the world.

He died upon the cross for our sins.

He was buried.

On the third day, He rose again.

He offers forgiveness and eternal life to everyone who repents and believes.

You do not have to earn salvation.

You cannot purchase it.

You cannot inherit it through national history or family tradition.

Salvation is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If you know that you need Christ, you can call upon Him now.

The words of a prayer do not save you.

Jesus saves you when you place your faith in Him.

If this prayer expresses the decision of your heart, pray with me.

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner.

I cannot save myself.

I believe that You died on the cross for my sins.

I believe that You were buried and rose again.

I turn from my sin and place my trust in You.

Forgive me.

Save me.

Come into my life and be my Savior and Lord.

Help me to follow You from this day forward.

In Your name I pray.

Amen.

If you trusted Christ today, please tell someone.

Speak with me or with another mature believer.

We want to pray with you and help you begin walking with Jesus.

And for every believer, let us leave with the right burden.

Pray for America without claiming promises God did not make to America.

Thank God for national blessings without assuming those blessings are permanent.

Seek the welfare of the nation without confusing it with the eternal kingdom.

Call people to repentance because judgment is real and mercy is still offered.

Begin repentance in the church rather than merely pointing at the world.

Do not become Jonah, sitting outside the city hoping destruction proves you right.

Carry the gospel into the city because God still cares about the people within it.

Love your country.

Love your neighbor more than your political victory.

Love the truth more than a comforting prophecy chart.

And love Jesus Christ above every earthly nation.

America does not need a secret place in prophecy.

America needs to bow before the Christ who already rules every nation.

Aloha Nui Loa.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

America in the Bible

Is America Anywhere in the Bible?

A contextual examination of prophecy, covenant,
national identity and the authority of Christ over every nation

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Reason Together Church

www.ReasonTogether.Church

Bring your questions. Open your Bible. Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

The Question Behind the Question

Few prophecy questions reveal the instincts of an audience as quickly as the question, ‘Is America in the Bible?’ For many listeners the question is not merely academic. America has been the setting of their families, freedoms, churches, military service and hopes for their children. They have been taught to regard the nation as unusually blessed and perhaps uniquely commissioned. When they open Daniel, Ezekiel or Revelation and cannot immediately find the United States, the silence feels surprising.

The surprise grows from an understandable but dangerous habit. Human beings naturally place themselves near the center of the map. A map printed in one country may center that country or continent. A reader can do the same with Scripture, assuming that the most important nation in his present experience must be one of the most important nations in the prophetic text.

The Bible does not organize history around the present influence of any modern state. Its story moves from creation and fall through covenant, Israel, Messiah, church, judgment and new creation. Nations appear because they serve that redemptive story. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome matter within the text because of their relationship to Israel, Jerusalem, the Messiah and the people of God.

This is why the best opening question is not, ‘Where is America in prophecy?’ That wording assumes the conclusion and asks the interpreter to find a place for it. The more honest question is, ‘Is America anywhere in the Bible?’ It allows the evidence to answer yes, no or not in the way many people expect.

GOVERNING ANSWER: America is not explicitly named or unmistakably identified in any Biblical passage. It may be included among distant lands and is certainly included whenever Scripture addresses all nations.

Four Different Meanings of ‘In the Bible’

The discussion becomes clearer when the phrase ‘in the Bible’ is separated into four possible claims. The first is explicit naming. Neither ‘America’ nor ‘the United States’ appears in the Biblical text. That observation is unsurprising because the modern nation and its name did not exist when the books of Scripture were written.

The second claim is unmistakable symbolic representation. A nation may appear in prophecy under a symbol or an ancient name without its modern name being used. This is possible in principle. The question is whether a particular symbol contains enough textual information to identify America rather than merely remind modern readers of America. After the major proposals are examined, none reaches that standard.

The third claim is generic inclusion. Isaiah speaks to distant isles and coastlands. The prophets look toward remote peoples. The gospel advances to the uttermost part of the earth. America can be included within such widening horizons even though it is not singled out.

The fourth claim is universal accountability. Whenever Scripture addresses all nations, every government and every people, America is unquestionably present. The United States stands under the Creator's providence, the Son's authority, the command to repent, the commission of the gospel and the certainty of judgment.

NECESSARY DISTINCTION: America may be absent as a name, but America is never absent from God's authority.

Providence Is Not Covenant and Covenant Is Not Prophecy

Three theological categories must remain distinct. Providence describes God's sovereign government of ordinary and extraordinary history. Acts 17:26 says that God 'hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.' Job 12:23 says, 'He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them.' America's rise, opportunities, failures and future all occur beneath that providence.

Covenant describes a relationship established by God with identifiable parties and promises. Scripture records covenants with Noah, Abraham, Israel and David and presents the New Covenant in Christ. The national covenant at Sinai belonged to Israel. A later nation does not inherit that status merely because its citizens read the Bible, its laws reflect some Biblical principles or its leaders use religious language.

Prophecy is revelation from God. It cannot be established by finding an ancient image that resembles a modern emblem. If a teacher announces that an eagle, lion, coastland or merchant power means America, the passage must supply the connection through context, explanation, geography or sequence. National affection cannot provide the missing evidence.

Daniel 4:17 *'The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.'*

God may use a nation without granting it covenant immunity. Isaiah 45 calls Cyrus God's anointed instrument, yet Persia did not become Israel. Isaiah 10 calls Assyria the rod of God's anger, then announces judgment against Assyria's arrogance. Usefulness is not innocence and providential opportunity is not an unconditional promise.

FOUNDATIONAL FORMULA: God's providence in American history does not create an American covenant or prove an American prophecy.

Why Most Modern Nations Are Not Named

The Bible never claims to identify every political power that will exist before the return of Christ. It is not an encyclopedia of future borders, capitals and alliances. Its selectivity is theological. Nations

appear when they touch the covenant story, oppose or assist God's people, carry out judgment, receive the gospel or stand within the visions that lead to the kingdom of Christ.

America is not uniquely missing. Canada, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Indonesia and most modern countries are not unmistakably identified in a prophetic passage. The perceived problem arises because American readers know the present strength of their nation and assume that present strength must determine prophetic visibility.

Isaiah 40:15 *'Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.'*

That verse does not belittle human beings or excuse injustice. It restores proportion. Every empire that appeared permanent eventually learned that it was temporary. Biblical prophecy does not owe a separate label to a nation because that nation is powerful during one portion of history.

Some prophecy teachers turn silence into a prediction. They reason that if America is not visible in their end-times chart, the nation must have been destroyed, disarmed by the rapture or absorbed into a larger government. Any of those scenarios might occur, but the Biblical silence does not choose among them. A missing label cannot reveal the event that supposedly removed it.

INTERPRETIVE RESTRAINT: Absence is not a prophecy.

The Isles and Coastlands

Isaiah repeatedly calls upon 'the isles.' The Hebrew word can refer to islands or maritime coastlands, particularly lands viewed across the sea. The expression extends the prophet's horizon beyond Judah and its immediate neighbors. It tells distant peoples that the God of Israel is not a local deity and that the Servant's work will reach far beyond Israel.

Isaiah 42:4 *'He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.'*

Isaiah 49:1 *'Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far.'*

Isaiah 51:5 *'The isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.'*

These texts have a beautiful relevance in Hawaii. Island peoples truly stand among the coastlands to which the gospel has traveled. The United States and the broader Americas can also be included within the remote lands reached by the Servant's salvation. That inclusion should produce worship and missionary gratitude.

Inclusion is not identification. Nothing in the word for 'isles' means the United States. The plural image is intentionally broad. It encompasses many lands and peoples. To make it a code name for America is to narrow a universal horizon into a national prediction.

Isaiah 60:9 joins the isles with 'the ships of Tarshish.' That pairing strengthens the maritime setting but still does not identify a modern nation. The chapter envisions the wealth of nations flowing

toward Zion's glory. The emphasis rests on the LORD and Zion, not on locating America in the procession.

CONCLUSION: The isles may include us, but they do not identify us.

Isaiah 18 and the Land Shadowing With Wings

Isaiah 18:1–2 *‘Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters.’*

The phrase ‘shadowing with wings’ has attracted American interpretation because the eagle is a national emblem. Some presentations add the country’s location across the sea, its diplomatic reach and its connection with Israel. The picture feels suggestive when its parts are detached from the chapter.

The chapter itself anchors the scene beyond the rivers of Cush, rendered ‘Ethiopia’ in the KJV. Its messengers travel in vessels of papyrus or reeds. Isaiah’s audience would have looked toward the African world south of Egypt, not across the Atlantic. The historical background is often associated with Cushite activity and diplomacy during the Assyrian crisis.

The Hebrew description translated ‘shadowing with wings’ is difficult and has produced interpretations involving buzzing insects, sails, shade or sound. That uncertainty calls for humility, but it does not create permission to insert a modern eagle. An unclear phrase must be interpreted by its clear geographic surroundings.

Verse 7 speaks of a present being brought to the LORD at Mount Zion. Isaiah often pictures distant nations recognizing Zion’s God. The broad theological trajectory can include peoples from every continent. The immediate land in the oracle, however, remains Cush.

CONCLUSION: Isaiah 18 is geographically anchored to Cush. Its wings do not establish an American identity.

Daniel’s Lion With Eagle’s Wings

Daniel 7:4 *‘The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked.’*

The modern emblem interpretation is memorable. Britain is represented by a lion. America is represented by an eagle. The eagle’s wings are plucked from the lion, seemingly portraying American independence from Britain. Once the parallel has been heard, it can be difficult not to see it.

Daniel’s vision supplies its own controls. Four beasts arise in sequence and are interpreted as kings or kingdoms. The vision moves toward divine judgment and the kingdom given to one like the Son

of man. Daniel 2 has already introduced a sequence of empires beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.

The first beast is not a lion that produces a separate eagle. It is one creature whose wings are removed. The creature is lifted from the ground, stands like a man and receives a man's heart. Those details fit the transformation and humbling themes surrounding Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar far more naturally than the political separation of two modern countries.

Lion and eagle imagery also belonged to the ancient world. Jeremiah can compare imperial invaders to lions and eagles. Babylonian royal imagery joined powerful animals in ways meaningful to Daniel's original setting. The British lion and American eagle arose much later and cannot retroactively determine the symbols.

CONCLUSION: The theory is visually clever but contextually weak. Similarity is not identity.

The Great Eagle of Revelation 12

Revelation 12:14 *'And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place.'*

Some interpreters see American aircraft, military protection or a national rescue of Israel. That interpretation begins with America's eagle emblem and then reads the symbol backward into Revelation. The text does not say that the eagle is a nation. It says that wings are given to the woman so that she may escape.

The Old Testament background is explicit and powerful. At Sinai God told Israel, 'I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself' in Exodus 19:4. Deuteronomy 32:11–12 compares the LORD to an eagle hovering over its young and carrying them on its wings. Revelation regularly gathers earlier Biblical images and brings them into its visions.

The eagle wings therefore communicate divinely enabled preservation. God provides a way for the woman to reach the place prepared for her. Whether God might use a nation, a miraculous means or ordinary events is a secondary question the vision does not answer.

This reading also avoids a recurring inconsistency. When an eagle means America in one verse, teachers may forget that the same image can represent God, imperial speed or predatory judgment elsewhere. Symbols do not have one fixed modern dictionary meaning.

CONCLUSION: Revelation 12 echoes God's Exodus care. The United States is neither named nor required.

Tarshish and Its Young Lions

Ezekiel 38:13 *'Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil?'*

Among the proposed identifications, Tarshish and the young lions is one of the more elaborate. Tarshish is identified with Britain, often because of western maritime trade. The young lions are then understood as Britain's daughter nations, including the United States, Canada and Australia.

Tarshish is undeniably associated with ships, commerce, metals and long-distance travel in the Old Testament. Its precise location is debated. Tartessos in Spain is a prominent proposal, but the word may at times function in relation to a trading network or a type of long-voyage ship. This debate makes dogmatism especially hazardous.

The phrase translated 'young lions' does not mean colonies or daughter nations. It can refer literally to young lions and figuratively to vigorous rulers or powers. The British-colony interpretation must therefore establish Tarshish as Britain, convert lions into colonies and then select particular colonies. Each step adds something that Ezekiel does not state.

The parties in verse 13 question the invading coalition: 'Art thou come to take a spoil?' The verse does not clearly depict military intervention. Even within a futurist geopolitical reading, the United States cannot be made certain from this protest.

It is fair to call the theory possible within a larger interpretive system. It is not fair to preach it as though the words 'young lions' plainly mean the English-speaking nations.

CONCLUSION: Tarshish is a legitimate research question. America as one of its young lions remains speculative.

The Earth Beast of Revelation 13

Revelation 13:11 *'And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.'*

A historicist tradition has identified this second beast with the United States. The earth is understood as a relatively unpopulated New World in contrast to the crowded sea of nations. The two horns are interpreted as republicanism and Protestantism or as civil and religious liberty. The lamb-like appearance suggests peaceful beginnings while the dragon voice predicts later oppression.

This interpretation has historical importance, especially in traditions that read Revelation as a continuous outline of church history. It should be represented accurately rather than dismissed with ridicule. Yet its symbolic definitions come from outside the passage.

Revelation tells the reader what the second beast does. It exercises the first beast's authority, directs worship toward it, performs deceptive signs, creates an image and enforces the mark. Revelation 19:20 identifies it as the false prophet. Its role is religious deception in service to beastly power.

The text never defines the earth as North America or the horns as two American principles. The imagery of lamb-like appearance and dragon speech warns that something can look gentle while serving satanic ends. That warning can be applied to any religious or political institution without making one modern state the beast's exclusive identity.

CONCLUSION: The internal explanation of the false prophet is stronger than an American identification supplied by later history.

Is America Mystery Babylon?

Revelation 17:18 *‘And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.’*

The America-as-Babylon theory has greater moral force than many emblem theories. Revelation 17–18 describes wealth, luxury, sexual corruption, violence, worldwide influence, maritime commerce and sudden collapse. These features can sound uncomfortably familiar when applied to the United States.

The details do not uniquely fit America. Great commercial and imperial centers across history have displayed them. First-century readers would naturally have recognized Rome behind the imagery of a city ruling kings and persecuting saints. The name Babylon also reaches backward to the ancient city as a model of proud human empire. Some interpreters anticipate a rebuilt literal Babylon while others understand a final city or transnational world system.

Revelation presents Babylon as more than one modern nation. The kings and merchants of the earth cooperate with her. The nations are intoxicated by her. Her sins describe a system into which many governments, corporations and individuals can enter. America can participate in Babylonian commerce and values without being identical to Babylon.

The pastoral application should not be softened. American Christians must hear the warning against luxury purchased through exploitation, commercial seduction, sexual immorality, violence and confidence in wealth. Revelation 18 commands God’s people to refuse complicity. The application is strong precisely because it does not depend on a fragile identification.

Jeremiah 50–51 must also remain in its setting. Those chapters announce judgment upon historical Babylon for its violence against Judah and Zion. Revelation’s inspired reuse of Babylon extends the pattern. A modern preacher cannot simply replace every occurrence of Babylon with America.

CONCLUSION: America may display Babylonian sins and participate in Babylon’s system. Resemblance can support application. Resemblance cannot establish identity.

Second Chronicles 7:14 and the American Promise

2 Chronicles 7:14 *‘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.’*

This verse is frequently quoted at American prayer gatherings as though ‘my people’ means the citizens of the United States and ‘their land’ means American territory. The spiritual desires behind the quotation may be admirable. The interpretation still requires correction.

The verse belongs to God's answer after Solomon dedicates the temple. The preceding verse speaks of heaven being shut, locusts devouring the land and pestilence among the people. These are covenant judgments described in Israel's law. God addresses the covenant people in the covenant land in relation to the temple.

Application remains possible and necessary. God honors humility. His people should pray, seek His face and turn from wickedness. The church should begin repentance within its own household rather than using the verse mainly to condemn people outside the church.

What cannot be claimed is a contractual promise that if a sufficient number of Christians pray, God must restore American prosperity, political influence or cultural dominance. The verse is not addressed to the United States and does not define national healing in American terms.

CONCLUSION: Honor the moral pattern, preserve the covenant setting and do not turn Israel's promise into an American guarantee.

A Better Text for National Repentance

Jeremiah 18:7–8 *'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.'*

Jeremiah 18 offers a more direct foundation for addressing any Gentile nation. God speaks of 'a nation' and 'a kingdom' in general terms. He retains sovereign freedom in judgment and mercy. The passage also continues by warning that when God announces good and a nation turns to evil, He may withhold the promised good.

This principle prevents presumption. National blessing is neither automatic nor permanent. The proper response to warning is not confidence in historical greatness but repentance. God's moral government is living and personal, not a mechanical exchange in which a country performs a ceremony and secures a desired outcome.

Nineveh provides the narrative example. Jonah announced destruction. The people believed God, humbled themselves and turned from violence. Their king did not claim a covenant promise. He asked, 'Who can tell if God will turn and repent?' That humility stands in sharp contrast to national entitlement.

Jonah himself becomes a warning to prophecy teachers. He sat outside the city, waiting to see it destroyed and becoming angry when mercy prevailed. A preacher can secretly want calamity because it will validate his chart, his sermon or his reputation. God's final question in Jonah reveals His compassion for a confused and violent city.

PASTORAL CHARGE: Do not sit outside the city hoping destruction proves you right. Carry the gospel into the city because God still cares about the people within it.

Is America a Christian Nation?

The answer depends upon the meaning of the phrase. Historically, Christianity profoundly influenced American language, institutions, reform movements and moral assumptions.

Demographically, large portions of the population have identified as Christian. Legally, the question involves religious liberty, establishment and constitutional history. Those are important discussions, but none by itself establishes a Biblical covenant nation.

The New Testament does not create a second earthly covenant nation. It gathers Jews and Gentiles into one body in Christ. First Peter applies covenant language to the church as a chosen generation, royal priesthood and holy nation. That people exists within many civil nations and bears witness among them.

Philippians 3:20 *‘For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.’*

Heavenly citizenship does not erase earthly responsibilities. Romans 13 commands respect for governing authority. First Timothy 2 calls believers to pray for kings and all in authority. Christians may serve in government, military, education, business and community life. They can love their country as a form of gratitude and neighbor-love.

The danger begins when the nation and the kingdom of God become indistinguishable. The gospel is not transmitted by citizenship. A person is not born again because he was born within borders influenced by Christianity. A flag cannot bear sin, a constitution cannot grant eternal life and patriotic sacrifice cannot replace the cross.

BALANCED CONCLUSION: America can be influenced by the Bible without becoming a nation promised by the Bible.

America as Ephraim or Manasseh

British Israelism attempts to connect the English-speaking peoples with the lost tribes of Israel. A common form identifies Britain with Ephraim and the United States with Manasseh. Jacob’s blessings in Genesis 48–49 are then interpreted through the later growth of the British Empire and American power.

The argument is attractive to those who believe that national greatness must fulfill a patriarchal blessing. Yet the Biblical genealogies do not trace Ephraim or Manasseh to Britain or America. The theory depends upon speculative migration paths, selective linguistic associations and historical parallels that could be applied to other peoples.

The theological consequences are serious. If America is Manasseh, promises made to Israel can be claimed as American promises and national success becomes evidence of election. The reasoning reverses the proper order. The text should interpret history; historical success should not manufacture a genealogy.

Some later forms of British Israelism contributed to Christian Identity and racial ideologies. Not every person who repeats the Ephraim-Manasseh theory shares those beliefs. A fair commentary should distinguish them while warning that unsupported genealogical claims have been used to sanctify ethnic pride.

CONCLUSION: Greatness is not genealogy.

Second Esdras and the American Eagle

Second Esdras, known in scholarship as Fourth Ezra for its main Jewish apocalypse, contains an elaborate vision of an eagle with wings and heads. The book appears in the Apocrypha of some Bible traditions and in historical Bible editions, though its canonical reception differs significantly among communities.

Modern interpreters have sometimes matched the eagle's wings and heads with American presidents. The national emblem makes the theory immediately dramatic. Lists are constructed, short-reigning wings are matched with short administrations and future political events are predicted from the remaining features.

The interpretation within Second Esdras points in another direction. In chapter 12 the eagle is identified as the kingdom seen by Daniel. The author is reworking Daniel's fourth kingdom in relation to imperial power, conventionally understood in the work's historical setting as Rome. The heads and wings belong within that imperial succession.

President-counting schemes also reveal their instability when succession does not cooperate. The list must be revised, administrations must be counted or excluded by changing rules and failed predictions are absorbed into a new version. This is a hallmark of newspaper exegesis rather than a stable reading of an ancient text.

Second Esdras is valuable for understanding Jewish apocalyptic interpretation after the destruction of Jerusalem. It shows how Daniel's symbols were reused in a later imperial crisis. It does not provide ancient evidence for the United States.

CONCLUSION: The eagle is tied by the work itself to Daniel's kingdom sequence, not to the emblem of a nation that arose many centuries later.

Arzareth and the Lost Tribes

Second Esdras 13 describes the ten tribes traveling to a distant region called Arzareth or Arsareth. Because the place is remote and uncertain, some interpreters have identified it with the Americas. The proposal is then joined to older theories that Indigenous peoples or later American populations descend from Israel's lost tribes.

The text does not supply recognizable American geography. It does not trace a route that can be verified and does not identify a modern country. An unknown location cannot be made certain merely by selecting the unknown land that best serves a desired theory.

Early modern writers frequently attempted to connect newly encountered peoples with familiar Biblical genealogies. Similar customs, selected words and migration stories were treated as evidence. Such comparisons may be historically interesting, but responsible claims of descent require linguistic, archaeological, documentary and genetic evidence considered together.

The canonical Bible never tells readers to locate the ten tribes in North America. Second Esdras does not establish the connection either. The theory should therefore be presented as part of interpretive history rather than as Biblical fact.

CONCLUSION: An uncertain place in a noncanonical apocalypse cannot carry the weight of proving an American covenant identity.

The Book of Mormon and the Americas

The Book of Mormon makes claims about sacred history in the Western Hemisphere and describes a land as choice above other lands. For Latter-day Saint believers, America therefore occupies a much more explicit place in scripture than it does within the Bible alone.

A careful Christian study should describe that claim respectfully and categorize it accurately. The Book of Mormon was published in the nineteenth century and is received as scripture by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and related movements. It is not included in the Jewish, Protestant, Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Biblical canons.

Its statements cannot function as independent proof that an ancient Biblical passage predicts America. To use the Book of Mormon as evidence for its own account would assume the disputed authority that needs to be established. The question ‘Is America in the Bible?’ must first be answered from the Bible’s own texts.

Respect does not require collapsing distinctions between canons. The same method should be applied to every religious claim: identify the document, its date, its community of reception and the authority being claimed for it.

CONCLUSION: The Book of Mormon contains an explicit American-land claim, but it does not demonstrate that the Bible secretly identifies the United States.

What the Bible Clearly Says to America

After the speculative identifications are removed, the study does not become empty. It becomes clearer. America stands within the direct reach of texts about every nation and every person. Those passages provide more spiritual substance than a disputed emblem ever could.

Acts 17:26–27 *God made all nations from one blood, appointed their times and boundaries and ordered human history so that people should seek Him.*

America therefore has no self-created destiny. Its time and boundaries exist under God. The doctrine also destroys racial pride. Every American, whatever ancestry, belongs to one human family and shares the same need to seek the Lord.

Psalms 2:10–12 *Kings and judges are commanded to be wise, serve the LORD with fear and 'kiss the Son.'*

American rulers are accountable to Christ even when they do not acknowledge Him. Political legitimacy never becomes moral autonomy. The church should pray for leaders and speak truth without placing its hope in them.

Proverbs 14:34 *'Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.'*

The verse states a moral reality without promising that any nation will remain righteous or exalted. It applies to 'any people.' America cannot exempt itself by appealing to former faithfulness, national symbols or the sacrifices of previous generations.

Matthew 28:19 *'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.'*

America is both a mission field and a missionary sending field. The church's calling is not to secure a secret place for America on a prophecy chart. It is to make disciples within America and from America to the ends of the earth.

Revelation 7:9 *A great multitude stands before the Lamb 'of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.'*

Americans enter that multitude through the blood of the Lamb, not through nationality. Citizenship can grant civil rights. Only Christ grants reconciliation with God and eternal life.

The Personal Question Is Greater Than the National Question

Prophecy discussions can remain safely distant. A listener can debate Tarshish, Babylon and the eagle without confronting personal sin. The sermon must eventually move from the map to the heart.

The most important question is not whether America's name appears in a prophetic passage. It is whether the listener's name is written in the Lamb's book of life. A passport cannot save. Citizenship cannot forgive. Patriotism cannot remove guilt. Church attendance and national heritage cannot produce the new birth.

The gospel answers the need shared by every nation. Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, died for sinners, was buried and rose again. He offers forgiveness and eternal life to everyone who repents and believes. The same gospel that humbles national pride also crosses every border.

This keeps the conclusion from becoming anti-American. The sermon is not an attack on the nation. It is an invitation to put every good gift in its proper place. Country can be loved, public service can be honored and sacrifice can be remembered while salvation remains in Christ alone.

GOSPEL CENTER: Your passport cannot save you. Your citizenship cannot forgive you. Jesus Christ alone can reconcile you to God.

A Faithful Christian Posture Toward America

Christians should pray for America without claiming promises God did not make to America. They should thank God for national blessings without assuming those blessings are permanent. They should seek the welfare of the country without confusing it with the eternal kingdom.

Repentance should begin in the church. It is easy to quote 2 Chronicles 7:14 while cataloging the sins of other people. The verse first calls God's people to humble themselves and turn from their own wicked ways. Judgment begins at the house of God.

Believers should resist both despair and triumphalism. Despair acts as though God cannot sustain His church if American influence declines. Triumphalism acts as though American influence is necessary for God's kingdom to succeed. Christ promised to build His church. He has done so under republics, monarchies, empires, persecution and peace.

Patriotism is healthiest when it tells the truth. Love does not require pretending that a nation is innocent or prophetically indispensable. A Christian can honor what is good, confront what is evil, serve neighbors and remain grateful without baptizing every national ambition.

The final allegiance of the church belongs to a King whose kingdom is not sustained by elections, economies or armies. Earthly nations rise and fall. The kingdom of Christ cannot be shaken.

FINAL CONCLUSION: America does not need a secret place in prophecy. America needs to bow before the Christ who already rules every nation.

Commentary Summary

No Biblical passage explicitly names the United States. The proposed identifications through the isles, Isaiah 18, Daniel's eagle wings, Revelation's great eagle, Tarshish's young lions, the earth beast or Mystery Babylon fail to identify America uniquely when read in context.

The silence does not predict American collapse and does not deny divine providence in American history. Providence is not covenant. Influence is not election. National greatness is not genealogy.

Second Chronicles 7:14 belongs to Israel's covenant setting, though its call to humility and repentance can instruct the church. Jeremiah 18 and Jonah provide clearer Biblical grounds for calling a Gentile nation to turn from evil and seek mercy.

Second Esdras, Arzareth, British Israelism and the Book of Mormon belong in the history of religious claims about America. They do not establish that the canonical Bible predicts the United States.

America is nevertheless fully addressed by Scripture. God appointed its time, Christ rules its leaders, righteousness and sin carry national consequences, the gospel must be preached to its people and its citizens will stand before God. The nation's deepest need is not prophetic recognition but repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

A Final Word

This study does not ask Christians to care less about America. It asks them to care truthfully. Gratitude for liberty, sacrifice, opportunity and national mercy does not require us to assign the country a name God did not give it or a covenant God did not make with it. Honest love is strong enough to receive correction.

It also does not ask the church to withdraw from public life. Believers should pray for rulers, defend the vulnerable, pursue justice, serve communities and use every lawful freedom for the advance of the gospel. The absence of a unique American prophecy does not diminish those responsibilities. It places them beneath the plain commands of Scripture instead of a speculative national destiny.

The church must remember that its hope has never depended upon the permanence of one nation. The gospel flourished before the United States existed and will continue if American influence declines. Jesus Christ is not waiting for any earthly republic to secure His throne. He already possesses all authority in heaven and earth.

That truth frees Christians from panic. We need not force America into Daniel or Revelation to prove that our lives matter. We belong to a kingdom that cannot be moved. We may serve our temporary country faithfully because our eternal citizenship is secure.

Therefore pray for America. Tell the truth about America. Serve the people of America. Preach Christ throughout America. And never ask America to carry the hope that belongs to Jesus Christ alone.

CLOSING AFFIRMATION: The Bible may not give America a secret prophetic identity, but it gives every American an open invitation to repent, believe the gospel and enter the everlasting kingdom of Christ.