

## The Folly of Forgetfulness



By Ben Godwin

In 1978, in Guyana, South America, 912 brainwashed cult members drank poisoned, grape flavored juice and committed mass suicide at the order of their deranged leader Jim Jones. An eerie message hung on a sign over the altar in Jonestown, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

Memory problems are universal. Most of us humans tend to be forgetful. You know what they say about life—as soon as your face clears up, your mind gets fuzzy! A bumper sticker reads, “At my age, I’ve seen it all, heard it all, and done it all, I just can’t remember it all.” So we need constant reminders such as holidays, anniversaries, and memorials to bring back into focus important events of our past. That is why God instituted the various feasts in the Old Testament (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Purim, etc.) as reminders of what He had done for His chosen people Israel.

In the New Testament, Jesus instituted the observance of Communion (the Lord’s Supper) and told His followers to partake of it “often” so as not to forget the price He paid to purchase their redemption. He said, “*Do this in remembrance of me.*” He didn’t want His sacrifice to be forgotten. We celebrate Christmas and Easter to remind us of the birth and the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The Psalmist David wrote, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and **forget not** all his benefits*” (Psalm 103:2). Other holidays are set aside to remind us of significant events of the past, lest we forget where God has brought us from.

July Fourth—Independence Day—has been designated to commemorate how we broke the chains of tyranny from our oppressive mother country England. In fact, the closing clause of the Declaration of Independence is actually a declaration of dependence upon God. It reads, “In support of this declaration, with a firm reliance upon the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” The 56 men who signed it realized that writing their autograph on that document was an act of treason and, without God’s help, they were doomed. Thomas Jefferson said what they all knew inside, “We must all hang together or most assuredly we will hang separately.”

In the past 239 years since then, God has allowed and aided America's rise to unparalleled heights in human history. Despite its flaws, America is still the greatest country on the face of the earth. America, the lone remaining superpower, is still the bread basket and the melting pot of the world. It is a beacon of hope to those oppressed by dictatorships; a bastion of freedom for those longing for liberty; a shining city set on a hill the world looks to for humanitarian aid when tragedy strikes. But prosperity has lulled us to sleep and we have forgotten the source of our blessings. I call it "America's amnesia." As our country becomes more and more secularized, many bite the hand that feeds them, spurn His moral laws, and spit in the face of the One whose blessings they enjoy. Jefferson's words still ring true, "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever."

Benjamin Franklin, one of the least devout of the founding fathers, implored the Continental Congress to have prayer in their sessions after weeks of endless debate turned into gridlock. He reminded the delegates of how God intervened during the Revolutionary War and answered frequent prayers in the colonies' favor. Then he asked, "And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need His assistance?"

On April 30, 1863, on the National Day of Prayer, Abraham Lincoln commented, "We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

The Prophet Jeremiah (2:32) asked, "*Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have **forgotten me** days without number.*" The Psalmist (9:17) issued a stern warning, "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that **forget God.***" May we never forget what God has done for us individually and collectively as a nation. Ronald Reagan cautioned, "If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

America is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy (financially, morally, and spiritually). Common sense has been abandoned and our government spends money like a drunken sailor. Congress' solution is to keep raising the debt ceiling (kick the can down the street for the next generation). Of all the major civilizations in history, most collapsed when they reached the state of moral decline America is now in. One author noted, "When any nation becomes overly pleasure seeking, history has already begun to write its epitaph."

Here's the good news, although America has forgotten God, He has not forgotten us. Isaiah 49:15 provides a powerful promise, "*Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have*

*compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet **I will not forget you.***” This promise, spoken over Israel, applies to God’s people of all nations. The only hope for America is a nationwide revival. David said it best, “*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses [military might]; but we will **remember** the name of the Lord our God*” (Psalms 20:7). America, we must recall and revisit our spiritual roots if we want to avoid the folly of forgetfulness.

Ben Godwin pastors the Goodsprings Full Gospel Church and has authored three books. Note: this article was recently featured in Ben’s column in the *Daily Mountain Eagle*, a newspaper in Jasper, Alabama. To read more articles, visit his website and take advantage of his 3 book bundle for \$20.00 plus shipping at [bengodwin.org](http://bengodwin.org)

