

# Now That the War Is Over

by Russell DeLong

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*America faces a moral and spiritual crisis, but can be saved through a national revival, where individuals and the nation as a whole turn back to God and His principles.*

**Scripture:** Joshua 24:15, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Romans 7:21, 2 Corinthians 5:17, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Moral Decline", "Spiritual Revival"

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## Description

Russell DeLong preaches about the urgent need for humanity to make a decision to choose God and righteousness in the face of moral decline and societal challenges. He highlights the importance of personal choice in living a righteous life and the power of God to transform individuals who choose to follow Him. DeLong emphasizes the need for a spiritual and moral revival in America and the world, pointing out the consequences of neglecting God and embracing sinful behaviors.

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## Transcript

"Choose you this day" (Joshua 24:15).

Israel faced a crisis. A choice had to be made. The prophet cried out for immediate decision. "Choose you this day," he exhorted.

History does repeat itself. Centuries have passed since Israel was confronted by the crisis of the text but humanity again faces the necessity of a decision, and I fear a quick decision, for God and right.

America is at the crossroads. This expression is trite and overworked. It is used for every trivial experience. But the fact is -- the United States of America will either make a definite, clear-cut decision to return to the principles which have made our nation great or continue to drop to lower levels of debauchery, sin, and corruption. And -- what is true of the United States is also true of the world. With war ended and peace at hand, two roads bid for postwar travel. Shall it be up or down?

We have to a great extent forgotten God. Church attendance is at an all-time low. Most churches have dispensed with Sunday evening services. Prayer-meetings are almost extinct, and genuine revivals are mostly reminiscences of former days. While these deplorable conditions exist, gambling is at

an all-time high. It became "big-business" in 1944 with a total of over \$1,000,000,000.00 gambled. We spent over \$7,000,000,000.00 for alcoholic beverages last year, which is an average of \$54.00 per capita for every man, woman, and child in America.

In 1942, 135,000,000 gallons of distilled liquors were consumed; in 1943 this was

increased to 143,000,000 gallons; and in 1944 it was increased to 165,000,000 gallons. In 1939, 54,000,000 barrels of beer were sold. This was raised to 65,000,000 in 1943 and reached a new high of 80,000,000 barrels in 1944. Divorce is increasing at an alarming rate. Rape, murder, suicide, and burglary are increasing.

Juvenile delinquency is the Number One problem of our criminologists, public officials,

and educators. Governor Dewey said recently in the columns of the Saturday Evening Post, "Juvenile delinquency today means a crime wave tomorrow." When these children become young men and women they will become criminals unless a turning point comes in the meantime. Behind every delinquent juvenile is a delinquent parent.

Carelessness, selfishness, and irreligion are contributing to the moral toboggan slide of

today. America will either decide to return to the faith of our Pilgrim and Puritan fathers, to the moral standards of the Bible and the vital religion of Christ; or slide headlong in the slough of moral corruption, sinful putrefaction, physical breakdown and mental disillusionment. As many more of our soldiers return what will they find? a half-drunken, gambling, God-forgetting nation? I am not a pessimist -- but unless something happens I am afraid that is the answer.

As our fighting men continue to return what will they contribute to the situation? Will the

ruthlessness of war with its blood, cruelty, and inhuman deprivations tend to make them less cultured, less careful, and less Christian? If they find upon their return that the civilian population is going rampant in reckless moral abandonment, will not their experiences tend to accentuate present distressing conditions? But, if our returning veterans find our country in a wave of spiritual revival and moral renaissance, will they not feel that the fight they made was worth while, and the result be that they will throw themselves into a movement back to fundamental truths and wholesome moral conduct?

We face the decision. The crisis is upon us. What of our children? What of our nation? The choice is ours. "Choose you this day."

Our present crisis is not the work of Hitler. He did not precipitate it. Dr. E. Stanley Jones

is right when he says, "Hitler is a symptom -- not the disease." World War II is only a by-product of the real war -- the war between right and wrong, righteousness and unrighteousness, good and evil, God and Satan. Periodically an eruption breaks forth in spite of our crust of civilization, education, and culture.

Twenty-five years ago we had a conflagration -- World War I. We set up two slogans. (1)

"Let's make the world safe for Democracy," and (2) "Let's have one big war to end all war." The bands played, patriotism burned high, Liberty Bonds were sold by the billions, high schools and colleges were depopulated of the finest of our youth, 10,000,000 were killed and 30,000,000 wounded. The Kaiser was the personification of the Evil One. We won that war. Peace and calm came. We set up the League of

Nations and the World Court. Countless sermons were preached on World Peace. All seemed serene and complacent. And yet -- in less than 25 years we witnessed a worse eruption than before.

Have you ever visited Yellowstone National Park and seen Old Faithful geyser erupt? All

appears calm -- you watch with expectancy. Soon you hear a rumbling, gurgling sound -- and then -- boiling water and steam shoots up into the air hundreds of feet, plays a few seconds and slowly dies down. The noisy, gurgling tempest passes. All is quiet and peaceful. But, fifty-three minutes later it all happens again. Why? Because down beneath the quiet surface is a sea of hot substance awaiting the right condition to erupt.

So it is with our world. A geyser every twenty-five years more or less. Our education,

culture, civilization, and social service beautifully landscape the environmental surface. We delude ourselves into quiet complacency dreaming that all is well, until a Kaiser or a Hitler appears creating the right formula for a hot, carnal, sinful putrefaction to erupt in war. We fight -- and win -- and then proceed to clean up the landscape and beautify it. We create the San Francisco Charter. We try to control humanity effectively. We treat symptoms and effects. We don't attempt to deal with diseases and causes.

Why don't we learn that the heart must be treated? Herein lies the task of the Church; not a salve to mollify the outward, but a serum to change the inward; not an organization, but an organic purging; not a system, but a Saviour; not an ointment, but a sin-killing remedy; not an environmental change, but an inward transformation; not an external re-organization; but an internal regeneration; not so much a clean environment as a clean heart; not so much a just society as a just person. Let us not delude ourselves by thinking that an orderly hospital room with clean sheets and an efficient nurse can rid a patient of smallpox. We need a medicine that can cope with the disease. So with society. It is evil people that make an evil society. Let's get good people and then we'll have a good society governed by good administrators.

Our need is not so much more education, better laws, or increased culture. What we need

is a concentrated, powerful, spiritual-moral penicillin-sulfanilimide-radium treatment that will transform men. Is there such? There is. Christ's coming was the answer. His power can result in newborn men -- new creatures. Old desires, old habits can pass away and "Behold, all things can become new."

The stage is set for a revival. Campbell, Cartwright, Leavell, Sweet, Muncy, Jones, and others have written books recently proclaiming the possibility of it. Will we actualize it?

Our greatest need in America is

Not for better legislation, but for better legislators --

Not for better business, but for better businessmen --

Not for better banking, but for better bankers --

Not for better farming, but for better farmers --

Not for better teaching, but for better teachers --

Not for better jurisprudence, but for better judges --

Not for better laws, but for better lawyers --

Not for better preaching, but for better preachers --

Not for better art, but for better artists --

Not for better music, but for better musicians --

Moral and spiritual value is the result of personal choice. To live right I must choose right. To be good I must choose goodness and repel evil. To be spiritual I must choose the spiritual.

But you say, "I do choose right and truth and goodness. But I find that I am bound by sinful habits; I find within myself unholy desires, and ungovernable temper, evil tendencies which my mental choices do not overcome. I choose right but I can't do right. I am in a distressing dilemma." St. Paul faced the same. He cried out, "When I would do good, evil is present with me ... the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do ... who shall deliver me?" Thank God, he found the answer. He found personal victory. When you choose, God acts. In our own strength it is futile. It is a losing battle. But there is a dynamic, energizing, regenerating power at our disposal when we choose God.

We as individuals must choose. If ten millions of church members would sincerely and

personally re-consecrate and re-dedicate themselves to a genuine revival of vital,

soul-transforming religion our nation could be swung back to God and saved from apostasy, crime, debauchery, and sin.

Will you let the movement start this moment in your own life? Will you this very minute

choose Christ? If you will, you will be the recipient of a power to change your innermost life. You can become a new creature in Christ. He can become a reality in your life. A new day can dawn. Life will take on new color and meaning. Life can be radiant and purposeful.

"Choose you this day."

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