

# Healing the land thru the Cherokee National Day of Prayer

## ~ *Setting the record straight* ~

First, let me spend a few minutes casting a vision from scripture as to the biblical background we should walk in with regard to native culture. Many scripture taken out of context begs a metaphorical interpretation. However, by examining the body of scripture without a lens of cultural interpretation can reveal much of Gods intent. Go a step further in looking at the original Greek and Hebrew text and things get very interesting.

In Joshua chapter 24, verses 25 thru 27, we see a glimpse of something intriguing. On this day Joshua erects a stone under a tree to “listen” to what God is saying to Israel. “See!” (Referring to the stone), “This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the Lord has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.” This scripture taken literally suggest that the stone has a sort of collective memory of what happens around it. Somewhere in the Middle East is a stone, perhaps forgotten that bears witness of a promise that was made. A covenant between God, His created order and his chosen people. Interesting to ponder isn’t it?

Let’s take this a step further. In Psalms chapter 96, verse 13 we read “he comes to judge the earth (dirt), he will judge the world (kosmos, created order) and the people with truth.” The word judge in the original text is more closely associated with the word “examine.” We see the three fold examination of God upon the Lords return repeated in psalm chapter 98, verse 9. These scriptures suggest that when God examines the history of mankind, he starts with the creation in a holistic fashion. It further suggests that the creations record of our dominion and stewardship awaits his examination. He will not only judge people but the condition of creation itself.

The whole of creation groans in Romans chapter 8, verse twenty thru twenty five:

*“For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”*

This offers further understanding to scripture like Psalm chapter 98, verse seven and eight. *“Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for the joy, let them sing (collectively) before the Lord.”* Job chapter twelve, verse seven tells us *“ask the beasts and let them teach you and the birds of the heavens and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth (dirt) and let it teach you; and let the fish of the sea declare to you. Who among all these does not know (spiritual understanding) that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.”*

Second Chronicles chapter seven, verse thirteen and fourteen states: *"If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (dirt)".* We have read all sorts of metaphorical meanings into this scripture, but the literal interpretation of this verse means he will heal their land (dirt).

Isaiah chapter sixty two, verse four states:

*"It will no longer be said to you, "forsaken," nor to your land (dirt) will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; but you will be called, "my delight is in her," and your land (dirt), "married"; for the lord delights in you and to him your land (dirt) will be married."*

Ezekiel chapter nine, verse nine thru eleven shows us what happens as a result of the lands bad witness. *"Then He said to me, the iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of blood and the city full of perversity, for they say, 'The Lord has forsaken the land (dirt) and the Lord does not see.'"*

John chapter three, verse sixteen states: *"For God so loved the world (kosmos-land, water, creation, and mankind) that he gave his only son that who so ever believes in him shall have eternal life".* This scripture examined in light of scripture suggest that perhaps we have seen our salvation from a self-serving stand point. We are saved to restore His kingdom within his created order (all of it!).

Habakkuk chapter two, verse fourteen reads *"For the earth (surface of the earth, especially the cultivated land) will be filled with the knowledge (knowing with familiarity gained thru experience) of the glory of the lord, as the waters cover the sea."*

Animals have played pivotal roles at critical times in scripture. This includes the following supernatural occurrences': Oxen delivering the ark back to Beth Shemesh (1 Samuel 6:10), Frogs in Egypt (Exodus 8:5-6), Gnats in Egypt (Exodus 8:16-18), Whales swallowed Johan (Jonah 1:17), Bears avenge Elisha (2 Kings 2:23-24), Donkey spoke with Balaam (Numbers 22:22-35), Ravens feed Elijah (1 Kings 17:2-6), Fish obey Jesus in gathering in Peters nets (Luke 5:1-11) and a Fish pays taxes (Matthew 17:27).

This gives a new perspective on the great commission. Mark chapter sixteen verse fifteen states:

*"Go into all the world (kosmos-total of all the created order) and preach (kerusso-to proclaim and to be heard) the gospel (Euaggelion-good news of the Kingdom of God and salvation thru Christ) to all creation (ktisis-a founding of a city, colonization of a habitable place and the total of all God created."*

There are many, many other scriptures in support of this view of creation from a spiritual platform. You can perform your own study. Read all of this yourself. The native people have for thousands of years understood this spiritual dynamic. Unfortunately, we use a litmus test of roman dominated religion to determine “what is God and what is not.” We have stripped away their culture, language, dress, music, sports, and spiritual understanding imposing our slant on most every facet of life. This has got to change.

Second Samuel chapter twenty one verse one thru eleven tells of a drought that came upon Israel during the reign of David. After three years God told David that the drought was the result of Saul breaking the covenant with the Gibeonites. Saul was humbled before them and asked to pay restitution with the offspring of Saul. They wanted neither gold nor silver but the drought was broken by the sacrifice of the sons of Saul. We (those of us representing the United States) have not broken one covenant with the native people; we have broken 387 treaties covering some 750 land sessions. Chief Dragging Canoe stated during negotiations of the Transylvania Treaty that the land “will be a dark and bloody land to inhabit.”

We killed millions with our rifles and guns in a form of genocide that makes Hitler and his final solution pale in comparison. This is not an emotional exaggeration. This is a historic fact. Our land is indeed dark and bloody. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights were only as deep as the color on one’s skin.

I saw a painting recently in the Cherokee Capitol. It was a photograph of the Constitution of the United States with images from the trail of tears imposed over its words. My goodness, what will the land say to God about all this? What has the land recorded? What is the witness it has against us? Whose innocent blood cries out from under the throne of God? (Genesis 4:11, Revelation 6:9-11) What will his examination of the heavens, earth and people reveal?

In 1784, Lieutenant Francis Marion a member of the United States Army was ordered to burn the Cherokee town of Chota. He wrote:

*“We proceeded by Colonel Grant’s orders to burn the Indian cabins (and fields)...I saw everywhere around the footsteps of little Indian children where they had lately played under the shade of their rustling corn. When we are gone, thought I, they will return and peeping through the weeds with tearful eyes will mark the ghastly ruin where they had so often played. ‘Who did this?’ they will ask their mothers and the reply will be, ‘the white people did it, the Christians did it,’ thus for cursed mammon’s sake, the followers of Christ have sowed the selfish tares of hate.....”*

There is an arrogant religious spirit prevalent in the church today that this all lies in the past buried under the dust of man’s collective past. That somehow the nation under which we live is founded under God. If this is the case it could not be the God of scripture. It would have to be some other lesser god that would condone a lopsided view of justice. This would

have to be a god that has no knowledge of or memory about covenants? The word says you shall know them by their fruit. (Mathew 7:16-20, Luke 6:43-45 and John 15:5) Under close historic examination you can draw but one conclusion. So who is the god of America?

But with God there is always a way out. He never leaves us condemned and forgotten. There is always a "If only..... in scripture" "If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray.....I will heal their land. We have a choice to make. The Cherokee National Day of Prayer is our "if only moment."

When the federal government established the great Smokey mountain national park they preserved one of the nations remaining large tracts of primeval forest (untouched wilderness). Today within the parks boundaries lie some 104,092 acres of land untouched by the hand of man since God created the earth. Conversely, this land is untouched since the Cherokee were removed in the fall and winter of 1837 and 1838.

If Creation bears witness to the activities of the people stewarding the land, then there is a deep well in the land of the Cherokee. We westerners tend to view America from the lens of 1776. If scripture is to be believed it suggests that the collective history we call America is but a fleeting moment in this lands heritage.

For thousands of years, the native people lived, loved, and died a life pristine and relative clean. The Cherokee nation controlled over 140,000 square miles. Some settlements date back to 8000BC. The five southern tribes that inhabit the land were monotheistic in nature. They believed in one God, the creator God. They did not worship celestial objects or any other created object. They did not make idols or images in which they attributed spiritual significance. They held sacredness for fire and each fall in a tribal ceremony removed all fire from each home and swept its ashes from their home. This ceremony was concluded during cycles of the moon. In James Adair's book published in London in 1775 he recorded his first hand reports of the Cherokee ceremonies.

*".....thus finish the great song, or most solemn invocation of the divine essence, the notes together compose their sacred mysterious name, Y-O-He-Wah."*

The land was fruitful, game plentiful, water unpolluted and air clear from any contamination.

William Bartram traveled among the Cherokee in the years between 1773 and 1776. He recants the following in his journal:

*“I have every reasonable argument from my own observations, as well as the accounts of the whites residing among the Indians, to be convinced that the condition of the women is as happy, compared with that of the men, as the condition of women in any part of the world. Their business or employment is chiefly in the house, as it is with other women, except at the season when their crops are growing, when they generally turn out with their husbands or parents, but they are by no means compelled to such labor.....The Indians are by no means that lazy, slothful, sleepy people, they are commonly reported to be. Besides, you may depend upon my assertion that there is no people anywhere who love their women more than these Indians do, or men of better understanding in distinguishing the merits of the opposite sex, or more faithful in rendering suitable compensation. They are courteous and polite to the women, and gentle, tender even to an appearance of effeminacy, to their offspring. An Indian never attempts, nay, he cannot use towards a women amongst them any indelicacy or indecency, either in action or language. I never saw or heard of an instance of an Indian beating his wife or other female or reproving them in anger or in harsh language. And the women make a suitable and grateful return, for they are discrete, modest, loving, faithful and affectionate to their husbands.”*

By the mid 1700's events were conspiring against the tribal survival of the Cherokee. European immigrants began spilling across the Appalachian Mountains in defiance to King George II of England's treaty with the Cherokee. By this time the Cherokee were dependant on trade goods from England. As the independence movement grew, lead primarily by the Scot/Irish who themselves had their own trail of tears during this time period, the hand writing was on the wall. Finding themselves on the wrong side of the war of independence lead to large sessions of land. It seemed that no matter what tribe was in turmoil the US government used this as an excuse to take further Cherokee lands. The Red Sticks wars of the Creek nation drove the last nail in the coffin toward tribal leadership. Even with the Cherokee fighting alongside of Andrew Jackson, it made no difference in his attitude. At one point in the battle of horse shoe bend, a Cherokee warrior saved the life of Jackson. This warrior died just north of Clarksville, Tennessee on the trail of tears. He was quoted at his death that, "if I had known what he was going to do I would have let him die." Finally with Andrew Jackson in the white house in 1836, an illegal treaty was signed by Major Ridge that was ratified by congress by the margin of one vote. Major Ridge had become an allie of Jackson's in the Creek wars.

“President Jackson was pressing hard, and on May 17 1836 the treaty was ratified by a margin of one vote. Jackson proclaimed it law on May 23.” The Cherokee had a year to remove themselves westward.

At the official gathering of the Cherokee nation tribal council held at Red Clay near Cleveland, Tennessee the national leadership rejected overwhelmingly the treaty signed by Ridge. Principle John Ross was held a gun point on Tennessee soil by Georgia militia during the signing in Georgia. This abduction prevented Ross from interfering with the obvious deception of Ridge signing the treaty on behalf of the Cherokee nation. .

Even with official Chief John Ross presenting to congress a petition with 16,000 signatures it did not matter. President Jackson was determined to remove all Indian nations and relocate them westward beyond the Mississippi River.

“President Jackson was in no mood for sentiment. Almost eight years of the presidency had left him weakened in health and lacking portions of his famous vengefulness. He was (expletive) tired of the Indian’s, anyway, take Sam Houston, the Tennessee Cherokee (expletive) who was now president of the so-called Republic of Texas: “the Raven” was showing all the Cherokee traits of defiance, as he was telling the United States government what to do. And here was (Chief John Ross) Ross back in Washington again-did he, Jackson wondered, now reside in Washington? Consider his last petition, a plea signed by babes in arms and dead Indians, almost everybody using an X. What the (expletive) did a petition mean, signed by sixteen thousand Xes?”

There was no hope of avoiding the inevitable. John Ross had been given notice in General order 74, as publicly posted, “that the treaty would be fulfilled in all its parts, terms and conditions within the period prescribed.”

During the summer of 1837, the United States military began the forced removal of all Indian nations east of the Mississippi River. They were marched to holding facilities that became death camps. Removal was planned to occur by boat, but a drought in the Tennessee River Valley turned the plans into kayos. The internment camps had no shelter, the surrounding county did not have the means to provide food, the Indians were allowed to immigrate with only the clothing on their backs and there were no provisions for sanitary facilities. Sickness and disease swept thru the camp. The young and old were the first to die. More Native Americans died in the internment camps than on the trail of tears. By the fall Chief John Ross petitioned the government to allow themselves to move westward of their own accord. The winter of 1837-1838 is particularly harsh. The Cherokee had been taken to the internment camps in their summer clothing. When winter struck they were in their shirt sleeves. The routes westward are littered with unmarked graves.

Once westward it was discovered that the land the government had granted them belonged to another tribal group indigenous to the Oklahoma area. Some diehard Cherokee were successful in hiding in the vast wilderness area east of what is now the Great Smokey Mountain National Park.

In 1925 the lands for the Qualla Reservation established lands for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee nation. Today there are approximately 12,000 descendants of those who stayed. While those who went west became known as the Western Band of the Cherokee nation headquartered in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. There have been several reconciliation events held over the last few years but the tribe is quietly divided over the removal issue.

Of the 387 treaties or covenants made with the citizenship or governments of the colonies, England or the United States none were kept. Only two covenants were kept. Both of these covenants were with the church. First was the Brainerd covenant located in what is now Chattanooga, Tennessee. The second was a relational promise made with the Moravian mission located in Spring Place, Georgia. Both of these missions kept their word and removed themselves westward along with their Native American family. The remnants of both of these missions can be found today. It was on the grounds of the Moravian mission in Oaks, Oklahoma that the 2009 Cherokee national day of prayer was held. Little did we know of the events that were to take place.

The land of the Cherokee that now has become the Great Smokey Mountain National Park is the most visited national park in the United States. Even though 70% of the land was heavily forested at the turn of the 19th century, the land has recovered well.

“Some 100 species of native trees find homes in the Smokies, more than in any other North American national park. Almost 95% of the park is forested, and about 25% of that area is old-growth forest—one of the largest blocks of deciduous, temperate, old-growth forest remaining in North America. Over 1,500 additional flowering plant species have been identified in the park. The park is the center of diversity for lungless salamanders and is home to more than 200 species of birds, 66 types of mammals, 50 native fish species, 39 varieties of reptiles, and 43 species of amphibians. Mollusks, millipedes, and mushrooms reach record diversity here.”

If scripture is to be believed, this land awaits the return of its native gate keepers. Jesus often went into the wilderness to pray. If that be the case, Jesus would find a wonderful sanctuary among the lands of the Cherokee. *“For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”*

## **Cherokee National Day of Prayer 2009 ~ *a new wind blows***

I had a dream back in March. In the dream I was on a platform that was part of the national day of prayer. In the dream the leadership was “going thru the motions.” But that the event had become a religious habit with no unction from above. God does not breathe on habits. I prayed that nothing we (Encounters network) participated in would be out of Habit. This dream gave us all the opportunity to wash our hands and check our hearts. “Who can ascend the hill of the Lord, but those who have clean hands and a pure heart?”

Clifton Pettit, a full blood Cherokee pastor was our Apostle to the nation. Clifton has a ministry in Marble City, Oklahoma. Last year we have the honor of escorting Michal Ann Goll to Marble City on what was her last earthly assignment. Her earthly body was ravaged by cancer, but her spirit was soaring. She stayed the course. She finished the race well. Early on there was some confusion about dates on our end. This confusion continued up to the date of our collective departure. Good things are always contended for at some point. Mark and Paula Rodgers drove from Cookeville, Tennessee. James Goll would be flying out of Cleveland, Ohio. Mark Roye would be arriving via San Antoine, Texas.

My hats off to Mark Roye, and Blood and Fires “holy smokers” who drove up to cook barbeque for all those in attendance. Mark and the team were up and cooking at 5:00am. Wow, what a heart for people. We also distributed 51,000 meals of packaged rice to the Marble City food pantry and the Two Rivers Native American food pantry. James then donated 250 copies of his book the Lost Art of Intercession and Angelic Encounters. These books we hope will open doors to many.

Paula and I arrived about 2:00pm on Friday afternoon. The weather was perfect. There was a fresh wind blowing. I could hear the children laughing. I had emergency eye surgery several weeks earlier. I was given approval to attend but Paula had the driving choir for 11 hours. It was a miracle that I could attend at all. Short of salvation my wife of 26 years is the greatest blessing God has granted me.

Friday evening we followed Clifton to the site of the event. There was a building that pulled at me for some reason. I told Clifton this was a good place to meet. There was a good history that the land was communicating. Please refer to the beginning of this article for the scriptural understanding of this statement. Apostle Jay Swallow spoke that evening. Even though he had lost his sister a few days earlier, Jay came anyway. Brother Jay has planted over 300 churches in Native America. If ever there was one who fit the biblical model of apostle, Jay Swallow is the one. Jay is of the Cheyenne tribe. He is a surviving descendant of the sand creek massacre. It seems the older Brother Jay gets the more anointed his message. He admonished the Cherokee to not lose their salt. He went thru a history of the salt covenant in the Old Testament. His voice resonated with the authority of the word of God. He ended by asking 5 individuals to come forward and pray specific issues over the tribe. My role was to pray for the marketplace anointing. We put a finger on the spirit of poverty. This spirit keeps us from believing for the miraculous.

We also prayed for big dreams. Our prayers moved people's expectations beyond substance living toward vocational blessing. Many folks want wealth without the wisdom or ability to "make" money. That isn't any fun!

Afterwards, a leadership meeting was held back at the hotel. Karen a native intercessor shared a word about the Cherokee picking up the Moravian lamp stand. I asked Clifton, "what Moravian lamp stand?" We did not know that we had just been on the historic site of the Moravian Mission to the Cherokee. I explained the extreme connection with James and the Moravian lamp stand thru the PrayerStorm effort, just as James Goll walks into the hotel. We explain that the event is being held on the mission site. James was astounded. He just happened to have the key to the city of Hernhut where the Moravians had launched out. This was going to be fun.

Saturday morning started out with a twist. We were to follow a van back to the mission site about a half hour from the hotel. The van got lost and an hour and a half later we arrived at the site. I spoke first at Clifton's request. He had asked for me to go over the history of the Cherokee. Much of this teaching was covered earlier in this article. I chose to speak in full regalia, Native American clothing is a bit of a controversy among some but I am not afraid of culture. Besides that, my great, great grandmother was named "Gu-le." This means acorn in Cherokee.

Several years ago we were given a judges gavel made from the wood from a sycamore tree near what was Fort Watauga in East Tennessee. This sycamore tree was the site of the first independent seat of government in America. It pre-dates the declaration of independence by 4 years. It is said that the independence movement spread to the colonies from Watauga. If scripture is to be believed than that tree heard the covenants of this first government in America. This tree bore witness to these covenants being made and broken. As a person with relatives in this settlement I asked for the courts of heaven to convene. I confessed there was not defense; there had been duplicity, fraud, and negligence with regard to the Cherokee. Ada Winn, was given the gavel as a protocol gift. She was a relative of Nancy Ward the last princess of the Cherokee nation. She carries a mantle for intercession among the Cherokee. We both declared that Justice would come to the Cherokee. She apostolically offered forgiveness and absolved the offence in heaven. The presence of God was thick in the room.

I introduced James next. James released a blessing on the Cherokee nation. He then took the key to Hernhut to apostolically come into alignment to Karen's prophecy regarding the Moravian lamp stand. James relayed that on his drive to Tahlequah he felt the pleasure of God on being with the Cherokee. James wrote:

*"I felt the pleasure of God on this out reach. I had not felt this realm for a while. I knew that we were doing What Jesus Would Do! It was held on site Moravian grounds where children's home had been built. I had my Hernhutt key with me so that made it all the more special.*

*I also briefly talked with Clifton Petite, pastor and apostle of the Cherokee, and we agreed that this would be yearly event on the last weekend of April each year. So that is awesome. We can now plan ahead for this.*

*My sense is that there is another tribe or First Nation's group that we are to reach out to. I am not sure who it is yet. But the Lord will show us.*

*There could be a full time ministry for many people just "being kind" to our Host First Nations People."*

James also released a vision that Michal Ann had carried for a Native American children's home development. James will be submitting a grant proposal within the month for funding. What a joy to be on the Moravian mission site which encompassed a children's home in its earliest history. We prayed over the land for the new vision to come forth. Who but God could have worked all that out! After the meeting a couple who have adopted many children insisted on giving the first fruit offering for this work. Wow, there is money in the bank for this vision to become real. This seed money is now a tangible reality of this wonderful project among the nations.

We finished up the day Saturday with a feast that Mark Roye and company prepared. It was kingdom if ever I saw it. Wow, Mark that was some amazing chicken and brisket. Makes my stomach growl thinking about it today!

James ministered Sunday at New Life Church in Tahlequah, Oklahoma and then made a quick trip to the NW Arkansas airport and then flew home.

We found out Monday that Cherokee Chief Chad Smith was present in the Sunday service in which James released many words of destiny among the Cherokee. James did not know the Chief was present.

"I just want to say thank you to all of you. Compassion Acts and Encounters Network and Prayer Storm - together we were a doing this week what we were made for.

Thank you for praying. Thank you for giving. Thank you for caring and making a difference."

Mark the last weekend of April next year for the 2010 installment of the Cherokee National Day of Prayer. It remains one of those "if only moments" for us to seek the face of God.