

Dr. Robert Jeffress

WHEN GOD
CHOOSES
A LEADER

INAUGURATION DAY MESSAGE
JANUARY 20, 2017

DR. ROBERT JEFFRESS

Pathway
TO Victory



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Nehemiah 1:11

Message at St. John's Church, Washington, D.C.

Inauguration Day - January 20, 2017

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President-elect and Mrs. Trump, Vice-President-elect and Mrs. Pence, families and friends, it's an honor to be with you on this historic day.

President-elect Trump, I remember that it was exactly one year ago this weekend that I was with you on your Citation jet flying around Iowa before the first caucus or primary vote was cast. After our Wendy's cheeseburgers, I said that I believed that you would be the next President of the United States. And if that happened, it would be because God had placed you there.

As the prophet Daniel said, it is God who removes and establishes leaders.

Today—one year later—God has raised you and Vice-President-elect Pence up for a great, eternal purpose.

When I think of you, President-elect Trump, I am reminded of another great leader God chose thousands of years ago in Israel. The nation had been in bondage for decades, the infrastructure of the country was in shambles, and God raised up a powerful leader to restore the nation. And the man God chose was neither a politician nor a priest. Instead, God chose a builder whose name was Nehemiah.

And the first step of rebuilding the nation was the building of a great wall. God instructed Nehemiah to build a wall around Jerusalem to protect its citizens from enemy attack. You see, God is NOT against building walls!

And the Old Testament book of Nehemiah records how Nehemiah completed that massive project in record time—just 52 days.

Why was Nehemiah so successful in building the wall and rebuilding the nation?

1. Nehemiah Refused To Allow His Critics To Distract Him

Someone has said there are three guaranteed ways to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing.

Any true leader is going to face criticism.

President-elect Trump, you, Vice President-elect Pence, and your team have been called by God and elected by the people to do a great work. It is a work far too important to stop and answer your critics.

President-elect Trump, you have had your share of critics from the day you announced you were running for President, but you've confounded them at every turn. First, they said you couldn't win the nomination, but you ended up garnering the most votes of any Republican in history. Then they said that was a fluke, but you couldn't win the election. And you handily defeated your opponent. And now your critics say you can't possibly succeed in your agenda.

Nehemiah had his own share of critics. Two of his chief antagonists were named Sanballat and Tobiah. They were the

mainstream media of their day. They continued to hound and heckle Nehemiah and spread false rumors while he and the Israelites were building the wall.

At one point, they said, “Nehemiah, you need to stop the project and come down from the wall and have a meeting with us.”

Nehemiah’s response was classic: “I’m doing a great work . . . why should I stop the work and come down to you?” (Nehemiah 6:3)

President-elect Trump, you, Vice President-elect Pence, and your team have been called by God and elected by the people to do a great work. It is a work far too important to stop and answer your critics.

2. Nehemiah Refused To Allow Setbacks To Stop Him

As you read through Nehemiah’s journal, you’ll find that he faced tremendous obstacles as he attempted to rebuild the nation: an economic recession, terrorist attacks from enemies, and discouragement among the citizens.

The true measure of a leader is what it takes to stop him.

But none of those setbacks was enough to stop Nehemiah.

Some years ago two sports commentators on television were discussing the late Hall of Famer Walter Payton, the running

back for the Chicago Bears. One commentator said, “Can you believe that during his career Payton has run more than nine miles with a football?”

The other commentator replied, “What’s even more amazing is that every 3.8 yards of those nine miles Payton got knocked down by a guy twice his size! But he got back up every time and kept moving forward in spite of those bruising hits and hard knocks.”

President Trump, you, your team and your families are going to face some bruising setbacks.

But remember . .

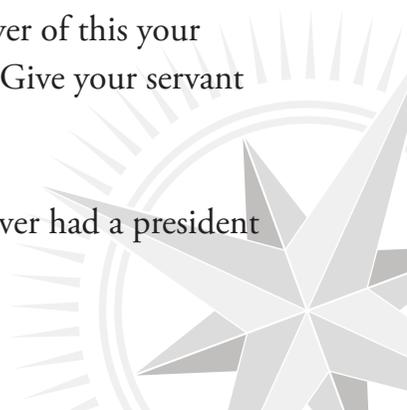
The true measure of a leader is what it takes to stop him. And knowing you, I believe it’s going to take a lot to stop you.

3. Nehemiah Sought God’s Help To Empower Him

Nehemiah was a gifted leader, but he knew he could not succeed without God’s divine help. And that is why as he began the great work, Nehemiah knelt before God and prayed:

“O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant who delights in revering your name. Give your servant success today . . .” (Nehemiah 1:11)

Mr. President-elect, I don’t believe we have ever had a president



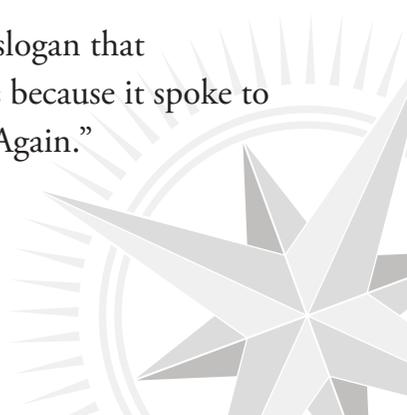
with as many natural gifts as you. As you know, the reason I endorsed you within weeks of your announcement that you were running was because I believed that you were the only candidate who possessed the leadership skills necessary to reverse the downward trajectory of our nation.

And beginning with Vice President-elect Pence—a great and godly man—you’ve assembled an unbelievably talented group of advisers around you. But the challenges facing our nation are so great that it will take more than natural ability to meet them. We need God’s supernatural power.

The good news is that the same God who empowered Nehemiah nearly 2500 years ago is available to every one of us today who is willing to humble himself and ask for His help. God says in Psalm 50:15 “Call upon Me in the day of trouble I shall rescue you and you will honor Me.”

When President Ronald Reagan addressed the Republican National Convention in my city of Dallas in 1984 he said, “America needs God more than God needs America. If we ever forget that we are “one nation under God,” then we will be a nation gone under.”

President-elect Trump, you had a campaign slogan that resonated with tens of millions of Americans because it spoke to their heartfelt desire: “Make America Great Again.”



Psalm 33:12 gives us the starting point for making that happen:
“Blessed— great—is the nation whose God is the Lord.”

May God bless President-elect Trump, Vice-President-elect Pence,
their families and advisers. And may God truly bless the United
States of America.

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DR. ROBERT JEFFRESS is Senior Pastor of the 13,000-member First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas and a Fox News Contributor. He is also an adjunct professor at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Dr. Jeffress has made more than 2,000 guest appearances on various radio and television programs and regularly appears on major mainstream media outlets, such as Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends," "The O'Reilly Factor," "The Kelly File," and "Hannity," and ABC's "Good Morning America."

Dr. Jeffress hosts a daily radio program, *Pathway to Victory*, that is heard nationwide on over 800 stations in major markets such as Dallas-Fort Worth, New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Houston, Portland, and Seattle. His weekly television program can be seen in 195 countries and on 11,283 cable and satellite systems throughout the world, including China and on the Trinity Broadcasting Network and Daystar.

Dr. Jeffress is the author of 23 books including *When Forgiveness Doesn't Make Sense*, *Perfect Ending: Why Your Eternal Future Matters Today*, *Countdown to the Apocalypse*, and *Not All Roads Lead to Heaven: Sharing an Exclusive Jesus in an Inclusive World*.

Dr. Jeffress recently led the congregation in the completion of a \$135 million re-creation of its downtown campus. The project is the largest in modern church history and serves as a "spiritual oasis" covering six blocks of downtown Dallas. Dr. Jeffress graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with a D.Min., a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a B.S. degree from Baylor University.

In May 2010, he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree from Dallas Baptist University. In June 2011, Dr. Jeffress received the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Jeffress and his wife Amy have two daughters, Julia and Dorothy, and a son-in-law, Ryan Sadler.

