

Session 4 God's End-Time Fire and Beauty

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 4. The book of Isaiah was written specifically for the generation in which the Lord returns. Yes, Isaiah touches his own generation, but mostly he's describing the one unique time frame, the time frame that God speaks about more than many other time frame put together.

The Lord goes to great measures in Genesis to Revelation to describe the generation in which the Lord returns. I believe we're in that generation; we're somewhere in the midst of that. I don't know exactly where, but I know that a lot has to happen before the Lord returns. The book of Isaiah describes the activity of the Holy Spirit in the generation the Lord returns. I believe this generation is that generation; therefore, this book is very relevant to your life. If you're going to be prepared, if you're going to have the information before it happens, the book of Isaiah is a must. It gives the clearest earthly description of the activity of the Spirit; the book of Revelation gives the clearest heavenly description of the activity of the Holy Spirit at the end of the age. If you want the heavenly perspective, it's the book of Revelation; if you want the earthly perspective, it's the book of Isaiah. Put the two together and it's combustible. Seriously, those two books together give us more information, motivation, and a sense of what's happening across the earth in this hour.

THE PROPHETS WILL DESCRIBE TWO GENERATIONS AT THE SAME TIME

When you study the Old Testament prophets, minor or major, one principle is very clear; it's a very prominent principle of interpretation. Most scholars agree with what I'm about to say, all the way through church history. The point I'm going to make is that the prophets in the Old Testament, all the way through the major and minor prophets, operated under one primary principle. Actually, there are a number of principles, but a primary principle is this. Often in the same prophetic word, they would address two general time themes. That could confuse you unless you know that that's what they're all doing. They're describing two time frames in the majority of their prophecies. They're describing their own time frame, the time of their own generation or very nearly their own generation, and then suddenly without a moment's notice they'll be describing the generation in which the Lord returns. All the prophets, without exception, move in and out of these two time frames. They ebb and flow. They're talking about their day, and then suddenly they're talking about the final generation. Often the same line, the same verse, describes both generations.

If you were to interview the prophets and ask which generation they're talking about now, "Yours or the one at the end?" they may not entirely know for certain which one has the primary focus in any given passage. In some passages it's clearly the end, and in some passages it's clearly their own hour, but for many of them it's an overlap, and God intended it that way. When you approach the book of Isaiah, you understand that there's the partial fulfillment in Isaiah's day, or the generations around it, and then there's the complete fulfillment at the end of the age. You understand that there's the local fulfillment within Israel in Isaiah's day, and then there's the global fulfillment at the end of the age. The prophets would ebb and flow between those two time frames.

ISAIAH, SONG OF SOLOMON, AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION

I'm going to pick four of Isaiah's favorite themes. There are probably seven or eight themes that are distinctly related to Isaiah, that I would call his favorite themes. I think these would be the top four. I'm not a scholar on the book of Isaiah. I have been reading it quite earnestly and energetically for the last one to two years, and my heart has been expanded to new horizons of understanding. If I were you—in other words this is what I'm

doing—I would seriously look at the Song of Solomon, Isaiah, and Revelation. These are three books which typically intimidate the church. Song of Solomon is too confusing, Isaiah is too confusing, Revelation is too confusing, and who can know for sure? Let me say this about those three books: they're books specifically written for this generation. The Spirit of God will provide understanding, and He has already provided teachers through the generations, male and female, who give us tremendous keys to those three books. Dust off those three books, and open them up; they're essential for this hour: Song of Solomon, Isaiah, and Revelation.

Typically we're intimidated by those three books, but I want to challenge you—not to go out tomorrow and begin to read them and buy all the commentaries; just posture yourself in a way that says, "You know, I need to get about those books sooner or later. I need to begin slowly, and maybe buy a commentary or two and begin little by little, inch by inch, to open them and say, 'Lord, give me a little.' Don't be overwhelmed and shut your heart to those three books; they're essential.

WEAK AND BROKEN PEOPLE ENERGIZED BY DIVINE POWER

There are several more themes in Isaiah, but we're only giving four this morning. Number one: his favorite theme is this—that God is going to restore the first commandment to first place in the last generation. Imagine when the Spirit of God moves and a billion people worldwide come into the kingdom; in that generation God would restore the first commandment. People would be wholehearted lovers of God by the power of God. Weak and broken people would be energized with divine power to be thrilled and overflow in love.

We look at our own lives and so many times we find ourselves spiritually bored; we find ourselves ensnared in sin; we find ourselves hopeless. Isaiah speaks to our day and says, "Let me tell you for sure: God will take broken ensnared, entrapped, bored, people and make them lovers of God. He will exhilarate them by the power of God."

AN UNPRECEDENTED MEASURE OF THE REVELATION OF THE BEAUTY OF GOD

Number two: His strategy. The first theme is His promise to make the first commandment first place, and the second is His strategy. He's going to use the beauty of Jesus as His number one strategy. The beauty that Jesus has possessed from eternity, He's actually going to reveal to us.

We see a little of the beauty of the Lord just in creation, even without significant enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, "Even the unbelievers looks at the stars and says, 'My goodness! Who put all of those jewels up in the sky?'" Even the unbeliever wonders and are suspicious that something is going on that's really big. The Lord says it's going to be more than the beauty of God in a small revelation through creation. He's going to commission the Holy Spirit to unlock the treasure chest. Isaiah loves this prophecy; it's God's great strategy to make us lovers of God. He's going to bring a new measure, an unprecedented measure of the revelation of the beauty of God. The beauty of God is going to stun us; the beauty of God is going to change us.

GOD WILL IMPART THE BEAUTY HE POSSESSES TO HUMAN BEINGS

Not only does God possess beauty, but God is going to impart the beauty He possesses to human beings. It's one of Isaiah's absolute favorite themes. The prominent Hebrew word in the Old Testament for *beauty* is mentioned eighty times. Isaiah himself uses nearly 50 percent of those references. I call him, "the prophet of the beauty of God." Isaiah saw the beauty of God and prophesied that God would make it the central strategy: that He would reveal the beauty of Jesus as a bridegroom, the beauty of Jesus as a king, and the beauty of Jesus as a judge. Those three faces of Jesus revealing the beauty of God are Isaiah's favorites.

AN UNPRECEDENTED IMPARTATION OF THE FIRE OF GOD

The second theme is this: God is going to use His strategy, the unveiling of the beauty of God. Beloved, it will increase dramatically; it won't be business as usual, as it is right now. So much of the Church is suffering from spiritual boredom, and God is about to answer it. He's about to double and triple and double and triple again the amount of revelation He commissions the Spirit of God to give the end-time church. He's going to release the three faces of the Lord, Bridegroom, King, and Judge.

Number three: the many manifestations of God. He manifests Himself as wind, He manifests Himself as water, He manifests Himself as wine, but clearly—and I believe incontestably—the highest manifestation of God is when He shows Himself as fire. God shows Himself as wind, wine, water, and all kinds of things, but when God shows Himself as fire, He's taking us to the very top of the list, to the very deepest essence of who He is. Isaiah says, "That's what I like: the revelation of God as fire."

That's the method God is going to use to reveal the beauty of God: there will be a spiritual impartation of the fire of God in an unprecedented way. The fire of God has two dimensions to it. The fire of God has a destroying dimension—I call it the "destroying fire"—where God removes the things that hinder love for His Son. God is going to release a destroying fire. We call it the "great shaking" prophesied in Haggai 2 and Hebrews 12. There will be a great end-time shaking. God has shouted from the beginning, "I will shake everything that can be shaken in the last generation."

Beloved, we're at the beginning of the time where the economy is shaken, where nations are shaken politically and militarily, where the world is shaken through earthquakes, where the heavens, the atmosphere above us, is shaken, where all kinds of dimensions of life are shaken. This is frightening, but it's important to know: there will be an unprecedented number of human casualties who are destroyed in the temporal judgments of the Lord. It's called the destroying fire.

God will answer the issue of sin on planet earth, but the fire of God being manifest as a destroying fire is only one kind of fire. The second kind of fire is an enabling fire; it's a fire that's positive. It's when God reveals God as fire and it enables us with new capacities in the Spirit. It's a fire that's called "the spirit of burning" that will rest on the end-time church. It's a fire that makes our hearts burn and changes our emotional chemistry; it's a fire that gives us new abilities in the Holy Spirit. It's a good fire.

The third point is this: the main method God is going to use to reveal the beauty of the Lord is the manifestation of fire. It's the destroying fire releasing His judgments and the enabling fire, the Holy Spirit, imparting abilities to the spirit. We will see the Lord like no other time in history.

The Body of Christ will have an intimacy and a perception like no time in history. This enabling fire will tenderize us and release new anointings. This enabling fire will give us the power to love God with all of our hearts. It takes God to love God.

AN EXHORTATION TO THE WEAK TO WAIT BEFORE THE LORD

Number four: the fourth major theme, in my opinion, of the book of Isaiah, is his exhortation to the weak and broken people to wait before the Lord. He says it over and over. Everyone knows the passage in Isaiah 40, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isa. 40:31, KJV), but Isaiah says that repeatedly throughout the entire book.

He says, "What do you do before a God who is going to intervene with such power, reveal His beauty, loose His fire, and restore the first commandment to first place?"

We all sort of look at those promises and say, "Wow! I'm in trouble. If God is going to restore the first commandment to first place, and I'm pretty cold-hearted, and the beauty of the Lord is going to be released and I don't really see much of it, and His fire is coming, I'm probably in trouble."

Isaiah says, "Let me bring it down to a really practical level. Wait on the Lord." You hear that exhortation all the way through. He says, "Take your cold, frostbitten heart and put it before the bonfire of God's beauty."

Take your cold heart that's ice cold, that feels nothing when you read the Word, that feels nothing when you worship, that feels nothing when you hear the Word of God preached, put it in front of the bonfire of God, and God will thaw you out; God will warm you; God will tenderize you. All that He wants is a "Yes!" in your spirit and an ability to wait before the Lord a little. He says, "Just start posturing yourself before Me." He doesn't ask us to do great exploits; He doesn't ask us to make great sacrifices. He simply tells us to wait and put our frostbitten hearts before the bonfire of God. Put your cold heart in front of the fire and certain things will happen. The fire will warm the cold heart, and all of a sudden you begin to feel differently about the things for which you had no feeling. You begin to say, "I like God more than I thought I did. I feel God more than I thought I did; the Word of God moves me and I used to be so cold."

There's another thing that happens when we put our hearts before the bonfire. Not only are our emotions warmed; those sparks fly out and they ignite new anointings. Those sparks fly out and touch us and ignite new anointings in our spirit. We have new abilities to operate in the Holy Spirit.

This is what God wants us to do; He wants us to wait before the Lord; just say yes in your spirit and don't shut down with hopelessness. Don't say, "God, the subject is too big; forget little old me, I'll never change."

God says, "I have only asked you to wait."

"No, I'm stuck in sin. You don't understand, God. I'm stuck in perversion."

God says, "I can thaw the coldness of that perversion. I can warm it; just put it before Me."

"I'm too busy!" Beloved, this is the worst generation to be too busy and to take a cold heart before the bonfire of God.

He doesn't ask you to use the Word of God and say, "I'll pray and read the Word as a negotiating chip, a bargaining chip with God." He says, "No don't use it to bargain with Me; use it to thaw your heart out. Take your heart and put it before the Lord in the Word; it's called a devotional prayer time. I will thaw you out." This is where it begins: waiting before the Lord.

GOD WILL CONFRONT REBELLION AND INJUSTICE ON A GLOBAL LEVEL

Let's look at the context of Isaiah 4. The context is the first five chapters of Isaiah, which are one unit. Isaiah is giving one prophetic oracle that has several different departments, but everyone puts the first five chapters

together. It's a very powerful message that God is speaking, because this is what God has been accused of throughout history. He has been accused of many things, but two of them are addressed particularly in the first five chapters.

Number one: God doesn't seem to notice sin. "God, look at the nations; they sin more now than they ever did, and You don't seem to care, or to notice, You don't seem to be committed; it doesn't seem like sin bothers You."

Isaiah says, "The Lord is going to act in a surprising way." In Isaiah's generation it happened a little; it was more than normal but just a little.

Isaiah says that at the end of the age God is going to be pictured as standing, arising. He pictures Himself as throwing off His slumber, as arising from sleep like a mighty warrior. He will confront rebellion on planet earth on a global dimension like never before in history.

God says, "If it looks like I don't notice, if it looks like I don't care, you have entirely misunderstood who I am. I have patience, I have a plan, I'm operating on a schedule, I know exactly what I'm doing."

In this time frame when God manifests His power there will be more people on the earth in a span of one lifetime than in all of history combined. Let's say the span of a lifetime is seventy-five years. The people who do demographic studies say that from the year 1950 to 2025, a seventy-five-year period of one lifetime, there will be more people alive in that seventy-five year window of time than in all of human history added up together.

God says, "When the majority of the human race is assembled in one hour across the globe, I will show that I have deep feelings about rebellion against Me."

GOD WILL EMPOWER THE CHURCH IN AN UNPARALLELED WAY

Number two: there's another thing that's even more grievous to the people. It looks like He doesn't care about righteousness. The Church looks unanointed, the people of God are bored and passive, and God says, "I only look like I don't notice. I'm about to turn up the heat. I'm going to confront rebellion and I'm going to empower repentance; I'm going to empower righteousness. I don't care how weak you are; if you have a yes in your spirit, I will give you supernatural abilities."

God is about to turn the whole thing up. Sin will not prevail. It only seems like He doesn't notice. He's watching with such intricate, detailed knowledge; He has a very clear plan; His wisdom is impeccable; and He's not silent—He's not overlooking either the Church or the world.

The world says, "Well, we got away with it this long; let's just keep doing it," and the Church says, "It's no use pressing in."

If you can let me put my own language to this dialogue, the Lord says, "I'm about to confront the world in a really heavy-duty way, and I'm about to empower the Church in a really heavy-duty way."

Isaiah 4 gives us the clearest description of how God plans to act at the end of the age. If you want a couple of other passages just for your own edification, Isaiah 33-35 is three chapters; it builds on what Isaiah 4 introduces. Isaiah 33-35 really picks it up. He introduces it in chapter 4 and develops it more in chapters 33-35, and if you're not content with Isaiah 33-35, then Isaiah 60-64 brings it to a whole new level. Isaiah 60-64 is the crescendo of Isaiah's theology. He summarizes it; he brings it all together in Isaiah 60-64. It's prophetic proclamations added to prophetic prayers in those five chapters.

“IN THAT DAY THE BRANCH OF THE LORD SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS”

Maybe you say, “Isaiah 4 is enough for me for now.”

It begins in Isaiah 4:2; strategically He's been describing how He's going to confront rebellion. He's describing how the nations of the world are going to be shaken. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken; the shaking is coming, the people's hearts are getting fearful, and they're saying, “My goodness, if You're going to confront the evil, what about the righteous?”

The Lord says, “I'm going to empower the righteous. I assure you, I will empower those who love me.”

Strategically, out of nowhere, He breaks forth with this positive proclamation: “In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious” (Isa. 4:2). “The Branch of the Lord” is an Old Testament title for the Messiah. Isaiah introduces the phrase, “the Branch of the Lord”; it's a very strategic phrase, which signifies that He's the source. He tells us in John 15, “I am the vine” (Jn. 15:5). In other words, He's the source of life, and we're the extensions of it. The branch speaks of that which starts small and grows, and Jesus said, “Eventually My fruit will fill the whole earth.”

OUR HEARTS WILL BE CAPTIVATED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD

It's a slow progressive growth. He's the Branch; there's a source of life that's running through Him that will one day fill the earth. There are many reasons why the title *Branch* is a dynamic and dramatic title. Isaiah introduces this title for the Messiah; Jeremiah mentions it twice. Zechariah mentions it twice more. In their references to this prophecy, Jeremiah and Zechariah develop more insight, and take it beyond where Isaiah takes it.

The Lord says, “I'm going to reveal the Messiah's beauty to planet earth.” It's more than just revelation in the sky in the natural creation; He's going to send the spirit of revelation. We're going to look like David did. David had this special anointing, which has appeared a few times throughout history. David would look at the sky and his heart would pound in ardent love because he could see by the power of the Holy Spirit the beauty of the Lord in the sky and in creation in a way that even the average believer doesn't notice.

David's heart was empowered with revelation. The Lord is going to reveal His Son's beauty that way, but it's more than that. There will be demonstrations of power, but it's more than that. The Spirit of God, through the Word of God, is going to show us what God is deep in His being. Our hearts will be captivated by the beauty of the Lord.

This is the central strategy of the Lord to restore the first commandment to first place: to reveal the beauty of Jesus and fascinate the human spirit with Jesus. Not even with His works, with His power, with revival, but the infinitely beautiful God is going to reveal His beauty by His Holy Spirit and thrill the human spirit.

THE HUMAN HEART WAS MADE TO BE FASCINATED BY A FASCINATING GOD

Why is the beauty of the Lord so essential? Isaiah begins with this thunderous prophecy; then he develops it throughout the book. He's truly the prophet of the beauty of God. David understood this thing about the beauty of the Lord; of course, David had been in heaven for a little under 300 years when this prophecy was given. David would say, "Yes, and amen, the beauty of the Lord will change the people. The beauty of the Lord works. I was a first fruit, I was a down payment to prove how dynamically changed people are by the beauty of the Lord. In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful," he said.

God has created the human spirit in such a way that we have a longing to be fascinated. We have a craving to be fascinated. The fascinating God made us with a craving to be fascinated. You can't repent of it; you can't quench it. You have a longing to be fascinated. That's what the entertainment industry is built upon; entertainment exploits this longing in the human spirit to be fascinated. It promises all kinds of fascination that it doesn't really deliver at all. When we're not experiencing this fascination, we end up spiritually bored. The human spirit was created to be fascinated; if it's not fascinated, it's bored, and when you're spiritually bored you're so vulnerable to sin and Satan. It's like a big bulls-eye on your heart: "Come and get me!" When we're spiritually bored, when the fascination is gone, when the marvel doesn't exist, when the wonderment with the Son of God is lifted, when the awe is no longer in the Church, the Church begins to look over the fence into the illegal areas of life. "Fascinate me!"

That's the strength of perversion. Perversion promises fascination. Young people go to the edge; so when they think of perversion and they're not satisfied, they go one more step, seeking, longing for anything that would satisfy the cry of their heart. The young woman, the young man, the old man, the old woman, keep going to further regions seeking for a fascination that they can never attain. The Bible calls it "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). It promises to deliver the fascination, but it never delivers it; it only brings you into destruction. We keep filling our bodies with different things, beginning in the lower arenas with drugs and alcohol. As our need for satisfaction increases, we're looking for something to alter our consciousness so that we can feel and be excited. We're looking for something, and it keeps moving on and on and on to regions of such destruction in that chemical abuse arena.

Some people try it through sexuality; some try it through money; a lot of people try it through ministry. "I'm bored! I'll get a bigger ministry, that's it! I'll push and connive and manipulate, anything to get more people listening to me."

Or, people in the secular realm say to themselves, "If I have more money, I'll be fascinated and satisfied." It never works; it never works. The human spirit was created by a jealous God to be fascinated by one thing and one thing only: the unveiling of the knowledge of God to the human spirit.

What's the greatest pleasure that God ever created us with the capacity for? God Himself. If we attempt to answer that fascination in illegal ways, we end up being crushed by the judgment of God at the end of the day. God wants us to be fascinated by Him, not in ways outside of His wisdom and counsel.

GOD IS ABOUT TO SET THE BODY OF CHRIST ON FIRE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

God's answer? He's going to grip the human spirit with the beauty of Jesus (Isa. 4:2). God's answer? He's going to set us on fire by what we see. There will be an emotional chemistry change. God is going to set us on fire.

How I love the verse in Isaiah. He says, "I won't quit moving, I won't be silent, I will not stop until I set the people on fire on the inside. They will be burning and shining lamps. I will set them on fire before this thing is over."

Beloved, God is about to set the Body of Christ worldwide on fire from the inside out. He's going to use the beauty of Jesus. What they see will set them on fire. It will change their appetites; it will thrill them. I tell you this: a man or a woman fascinated, a man or a woman with a bit of awe in their heart, sins less, quits less, endures temptations and persecutions, gives more, works harder in the kingdom, does everything better than's good and everything less than's bad when they're fascinated.

A bored church sins more, divides more, complains more, quits more, gives less, works less; they're bored on the inside, and most people are looking for a new experience in ministry or a new experience in the secular arena or a new experience of entertainment to boost them up on the inside. Beloved, those things will not happen if the center is empty. There's a fascination that we're created for, and God fully intends to answer with power like no other time in history. It's a very powerful thing.

THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD IS THE SUSTAINING POWER OF ALL GOD DOES

There are three applications of verse 2. There are more, but three I want to address right now for just a moment. This is a monumental prophecy; this is a mountain in the middle of Isaiah's theology. It's the idea that God's beauty would be unfolded, and the implications are massive. This isn't just, "Oh yeah, you're going to like what He looks like."

He's saying, "There are massive consequence and implications of the God who hides beauty, no longer hiding it but unveiling it like never before. It will stun the redeemed, empowering them to embrace any manner of obedience."

Number one: there's a theological application. The beauty of the Lord is the sustaining power of everything that God is going to do. He will draw people into it. We will burn out and we will wear out. Theologically it's the source, the fountain, of everything God is going to describe in the book of Isaiah in the great revival. Theologically, the beauty of the Lord is the centerpiece. It's the revelation of the beauty of the Lord. I like to talk about the three faces of His beauty: the Bridegroom, the King, and the Judge.

Secondly, there's an emotional application. When we see that the beauty of the Lord will be revealed, we say in our hearts, "Our husbands, our wives, our children, our parents, our neighbors, there's hope for them! There's hope for me!" It gives us an emotional encouragement.

God says, "Help is on the way. There's a new measure of revelation; there's a new power that's coming that will set people on fire, so that the hopeless, bored, stuck-in-perversion church can say, 'I'm going to be changed, and it won't be business as usual; something unprecedented is coming.'"

THE SAME FIRE THAT DEVOURS THE RESISTANT, ENABLES THE HUNGRY

Number three: there's a practical application as well. There's a focus of the individual heart. Yes, we're to have our hands occupied in natural responsibilities in the home, in the job; our hands are to be occupied in responsibilities of ministry, but our heart is to be preoccupied with a person.

Our hands are preoccupied while our hearts are occupied. While our hands are laboring in all the spheres of life, Isaiah says, "If you have any understanding, I'm giving you a very practical application. Do what David did; he's the first fruits to show that this thing really works."

It changes you; it moves you away from the place called *stuck*. It saves you from burnout. My prayer is that at this church, in all the things that we do, there's a growing, practical, focus at the core of the individuals on the beauty of the Lord. We say, "We're not that good at it; we don't get hold of it that much, but we have focus, a growing inward focus."

That's the practical application, and in everything that God does—bringing in the multitudes, bringing in the harvest—let me tell you one thing: the Spirit of God wants to make people absolutely, holily, infatuated with the beauty of Jesus. It's coming; it's coming. Something unprecedented is about to break in upon the human race. It's God's plan to restore the first commandment to first place. His strategy is the beauty of the Lord. His method is the release of the fire of God. The promise is the first commandment restored to first place. He's making us wholehearted lovers. The strategy? God says, "I'm going to change their emotional chemistry; I'm going to show them My Son's beauty."

The method will be the fire of God. He's going to intervene with manifest fire. He's coming as a God of fire, and again, there are many metaphors of God in the scriptures: wind, wine, water, and a multitude of others, but clearly the highest expression of the essence of God is the fire. It's a fire with two sides, two sides without contradiction. It's not God acting one way one time and another way another time; it's the same God, the same fire, but two applications according to the heart response. To the rebellious, the fire destroys; to the repentant, even though they're immature, the fire enables. The same fire destroying those who resist, enables those who say, "Yes!"

I don't care what you're stuck in; I don't care what manner of pornography, or drugs, or substance abuse, I don't care what sin, I don't care how perverted it is, if you have a yes in your spirit, this fire will progressively deliver you. If you resist Him, this fire will crush the earth.

God says, "I only look like I don't notice; I'm about to intervene on a global dimension." Isaiah said it as clearly as anyone in the Bible. As a matter of fact, Isaiah said it clearer than anyone.

GOD'S JUDGMENTS WILL SLAY A THIRD OF THE HUMAN RACE

Beloved, this is frightening, but it's true. The shaking is going to come to such a degree that one-third of the human race will be cut off in premature death (Rev. 9:15). One-third of the human race will be killed by the temporal judgments of God—not the devil, the temporal judgments of God. Believers and unbelievers will be swept away in the temporal judgments.

People say, "Wait a second now, we're not appointed to wrath."

The eternal wrath will never touch a believer. God's wrath will never touch us, but do you think that when the earthquakes hit in various parts of the earth there aren't believers who are being swept away? They go right into the presence of God; they don't have any complaints. They step right over the line and say, "Wow! this is awesome!" Their friends and family are crying and hurt, but they're happy as can be and saying, "Wow! Boy,

did I get the deal. I got my leave of absence from my tour of duty on planet earth. I'm home now. I don't have to go to the war zone."

The point of it is that this thing is coming. There are 1.5 million people in the Kansas City metropolitan area. One-third of that means that 500,000 people in Kansas City will eventually be swept away by the temporal judgments. They will die premature deaths; they will die deaths that are tragically inflicted on them by the judgments of God in the earth.

I know the church isn't ready for that, but it's still coming. It's still coming. The Lord says, "My fire is about to be manifest." In Isaiah 4:4, the spirit of judgment is when God uses the destroying fire to wake up planet earth.

You say, "Well, God, You're awfully mean to do that."

He says, "No, no! I'm not, because My destroying judgments, My destroying fire, wakes them up. Why? Because eternal judgment and wrath is waiting around the corner."

God is going to use the temporal judgments to wake up the other people because of His goodness and kindness.

THE SPIRIT OF BURNING WILL MAKE US WHOLEHEARTED LOVERS OF GOD

There's another kind of fire that doesn't confront rebellion, but empowers those who are willing. It's called "the spirit of burning" at the end of verse 4. It has an entirely different dimension to it. It imparts capacities in the spirit. We read the Word of God and we feel dull and bored and have no attention. The Lord says, "I'm going to warm your spirit and put new capacities on your spirit for Me. I'm going to give you the ability to see the invisible; I'm going to give you the ability to supernaturally perceive the imperceptible, to see the unseen. You will walk around with the reward in you. Your heart will flow like a river on the inside with love, and they'll take this from you and they'll say that about you but you'll carry the reward with you—the knowledge of God."

That spirit of burning gives you the ability to perceive; it will give you the ability to make known the beauty of Jesus to others through words and deeds. It will impart new anointings. The spirit of burning will impart new anointings to make known the beauty of Jesus through word and deed. The spirit of burning will make us lovers of God. It's a fantastic deal! We're going to be made lovers of God. God will employ a twofold method: the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. One is positive and one is negative. The spirit of burning is positive, and the spirit of judgment is negative.

The redeemed at the end of the age will be described in three different ways, by three different words, at the end of Isaiah 4:2 and the beginning of Isaiah 4:3. At the very end of Isaiah 4:2, it says that for those of Israel who have escaped, the beauty of the Lord will be revealed. This is talking specifically to the redeemed of the nation of Israel, but it's a picture; God is showing us a display of what He's going to do in the redeemed worldwide. He's talking about the revival of Jesus people in the nation of Israel. He says, "If I do it in the most difficult place in the world, how much more will I do it everywhere else?" He's not confining this description to Israel; He's saying, "If I do it in the hardest place in the earth, it will be easy to do it anywhere else." Of course, with the Lord this is easy to do anyway. It's all a matter of His timing.

He says, "Those of Israel who have escaped" (Isa. 4:2b). That's kind of a frightening word—escaped what? What is there to escape? Of course we already know what it is: the spirit of judgment. It's the great end-time

shaking that's going to cause an unprecedented amount of human destruction of planet earth before the eternal judgments of God break forth.

THOSE WHO REMAIN WILL BE CALLED HOLY

“And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem” (Isa. 4:3).

He uses phrases like, “those who escaped, those who are left, those who remain”; it gives you this really funny feeling. *Escaped, remained, left*—what about the rest of the human race? It implies that a number are not going to escape, and that's the truth. Isaiah makes it graphically clear that the timing is the end of the age—the great shaking. Fact number one about these people: there is a remnant that God will supernaturally spare, but He will spare them for a purpose. Because He loves them? No, not exactly because He loves those who are born again and go to heaven. He's not keeping them on the earth because He loves them. He loves the ones He's taking home prematurely. He's keeping them on the earth because they have agreed to follow His plan. His plan is to restore the first commandment in the earth. He's going to cause a remnant that has said, “Yes!” to holiness to remain. He's going to give the others a leave of absence, an honorable discharge, He's going to bring them on home, because so many of them are confusing the waters. So much of the division, so much of the human opinion, so much of the strife, comes from them.

The Lord says, “I'm going to help the end-time church and take a bunch of them out of the way and pat them on the back and bring them on up into glory. I'm going to have a single-minded, love-consumed people who are totally unified at the end of the age.”

He says the word *holy*, and for the word *holy* put, “extravagant lovers; people separated unto God.” *Holy* doesn't mean you stay away from bad movies and don't wear makeup. That isn't what He's talking about. He's talking about people who are extravagantly separated as lovers unto God; those are the ones who will remain. He wants the lovers staying on the earth, though as a rule some of them will be taken home. He wants the lovers setting others on fire; He wants the wholehearted lovers being unified and becoming vessels of the glory of God. They will be called *holy* on earth and in heaven; they will be people who are abandoned to God. The others He will go ahead and give a leave of absence; an honorable discharge. He's going to bring them home. They'll like it better up there anyway, than they do down here. They could never quite get in line with what He was doing; it will be better for them there.

“EVERYONE WHO IS RECORDED AMONG THE LIVING IN JERUSALEM”

It will be better for His purpose on earth in terms of the unredeemed. The unredeemed, when they go, will go to eternal destruction. There's a remnant, and I don't know, but I imagine it being hundreds of millions of people. Beloved, believe me: there's a remnant that will be essential, and the issue of the remnant is that they're wholly given to God; they'll be fiery lovers. The word is *holy*.

It says, “Everyone whose name is written in the book, the book of the living” (Isa. 4:3b, paraphrased). The book of the living is a very interesting concept; in the Old Testament it's mentioned seven or eight times. The prophets describe a book that God writes and keeps. God writes things in the book about people on the earth, and this book says, who, what, when, where, and why people exit the earth. It's His sovereignty; no one can challenge it effectively.

God says, "I have written a book; I have sovereign things that I've ordained. I have things that I have established for the end times that are so precious to Me that I have a book recorded, and the ones that I have recorded, the ones that I have set apart unto Myself for this hour"—I believe it's hundreds of millions—"I have written them in my book, and they'll escape. The others, believer and unbelievers, will either go on home and get an early break, if they're believers, or, if not, will go on to destruction forever and ever."

There's a book, and it's sovereignly ordained. This book of the living is going to be a real source of trouble to human beings. They don't like Someone who exerts authority over life and death. They say, "Who are You to determine who goes and who stays?"

"I'm the God of all the living, and those whose names are written in My book to be survivors will remain. Those whose names I have written to leave, will leave."

This issue of anger against God will be centered around His right and authority, His choices, and His timing, about who stays and who leaves. It's all written in the book; it's the book of the living. It isn't just the book of who was saved; it's the book of strategy at the end of the age as well. God says who, where, when, and why. People say, "I don't like your choice."

The Lord says, "It behooves you to bow before Me, because if you get angry and adversarial, you'll get in great trouble; but if you yield to Me in humility and become tenderized, you'll be a partaker of the enabling fire."

It's a sovereign and a massive choice. It isn't as simple as I'm making it. In the early church, two men were put into prison, James and Peter. James had his head cut off, and Peter was delivered. Those things are written in the book. It's not just a matter of who was more mature; it's not that simple. One of the elements is being given to God, but James was a holy apostle, totally given to God. Yet he was taken and the other spared. The end-time judgments are going to have a divine strategy about them.

THE SPIRIT OF BURNING WILL REMOVE FILTH FROM THE EARTH

Verse 4 tells us the purpose of God in this spirit of burning. What is the purpose? To wash away filth; to purge away bloodguiltiness. God says, "Why do I want the spirit of judgment to come? I want to remove filth from planet earth."

There are two applications. He says, "You think I've been sleeping and I don't know the abominations increasing on planet earth. I'm going to wash it away with My power by the spirit of burning and the spirit of judgment." But He's also going to confront the rebellious and wash them away.

To the most immature believer who says to God, "Give me forgiveness in Christ Jesus," it's different. Zechariah calls it a fountain that will be opened up in the last days (Zech. 13:1). It's a phenomenal promise: in the last days, a fountain will be opened, and it will go over nations and wash them from their perversion, their immorality, their rebellion, their covetousness, their anger, their murder, their rage. They will be washed as a free gift, washed and cleansed, no fear of being found out; instantly cleansed by the fountain that God will open at the end of the age. If you're rebellious, you're taken away in judgment; if you have a yes in your spirit to Jesus, He forgives you freely.

He's going to purge away bloodguiltiness. The blood defiles the land, the Bible says. The Church will be persecuted in Israel; there will be bloodshed in the last generation, as there was in the first generation. They will shed the blood of other Jewish believers, and the land will be polluted. The whole earth will be doing it. God says, "I need to cleanse the land." Abortion is defiling the land. Wars, all these unrighteous wars, defile the land; there are many ways in which blood is shed that defiles the land.

God says, "Before My Son returns, I have to settle the issue of cleansing the land. I have to cleanse the hearts by washing filth away. I have to cleanse the land; I have to purge bloodguiltiness off the land before My Son can return." Those are issues of the justice of God.

Now, Isaiah 4:5-6 is describing the remnant that's saved that's empowered by God. Beloved, you'll read it and say, "No!" I've read this to people and they said, "Yes, but that can't mean God is really going to do it, right?"

"Wait a second, let's just read it."

Then it says that when the shaking is falling and people are being killed by the judgments of God, the righteous, the lovers, are escaping—some of them, but not all of them. The power of God is moving on the earth, the beauty of the Lord. The Lord hasn't returned to the earth yet. Mt. Zion isn't a geographic place in Israel; Mt. Zion is the habitation of God. It's where God manifests Himself in the Spirit through Jesus. Hebrews 12 says that the Church is Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:22). We're Mt. Zion because we have access to the presence of God by the Holy Spirit through Jesus.

FIRE AND CLOUD WILL APPEAR ABOVE EVERY DWELLING

Above every dwelling place there will be a cloud of smoke and a pillar of fire. Some of you are saying, "Wait, now say that one more time."

Isaiah says, "I'm only saying what I see." At the end of the age the cloud of smoke is going to return; the shining flame of fire is going to return.

"What do you mean it's going to return?"

Those are things that happened with Moses in Egypt: the fire and the cloud. We got so used to those in children's church, teaching the children those stories, that it has never impacted us. Beloved, fire and cloud appeared above all the people of God, for real. The Lord says, "You think I'm going to end the age in less of a power demonstration than that with which I began it?"

In Acts 2, the 120 intercessors are gathered together in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. "Oh Lord, send your spirit, send your spirit." In verse 3, suddenly, Peter opens his eyes, hits John with his elbow, and says, "John, open your eyes and look!"

John opens his eyes, and it says, "The fire of God appeared to every one of them" (Acts 2:3, paraphrased). What will you do when the fire appears in the buildings? Literally, not kind of, or something like it, the fire will appear again.

Peter says, "John, do you see it?"

John says, “Peter, we’ve all seen it! Quit talking; right now is not the time to talk; you’re always talking when you should be quiet, Peter. We’ve all seen the fire, and it’s resting on every one of them. It’s just hovering over them, brooding over them, empowering them with an enabling power. The fire is resting, giving them new abilities to see, to preach, new abilities to love; it’s transforming their emotional chemistry.”

John the Baptist called it the baptism of fire (Mt. 3:11). It comes and changes weak men into supernaturally-empowered men and women, children, old or young. It isn’t related to your station in life; it’s related to the power of God.

The fire that appeared on the day of Pentecost was a one-time deal. Isaiah says, “That was a first fruits. That was a down payment.” Right now the Church is struggling with holy laughter; people come and laugh a bit, and some shake and some fall; others say, “Maybe yes,” and, “Maybe no,” and there’s all the discussion and debate. Before the end, it’s going to be blood, fire, and smoke, not just laughing and falling. I think the laughing and falling will be there. I think those kind of dimensions will stay there, and possibly even increase in some ways. I don’t think the Lord is replacing them, but adding to them.

Peter quotes Joel and says there will be three major manifestations: blood, fire, and smoke (Acts 2:19). Blood? Yes! Blood will be one of the main manifestations at the conference. Blood! Whose blood? Where? In Moses’ day, it appeared in the Nile River; the entire Nile River turned to blood.

That was the old covenant; that was the covenant with no glory when compared to the new covenant. The whole river turned to blood when the prophet spoke. My guess is that there are ten or twenty complete, different manifestations of each one of those three categories. This isn’t comprehensive, but a hint. Isaiah says there’s going to be fire and smoke. He calls it a cloud and smoke; I believe it’s a cloud of smoke, the glory cloud. The glory cloud is entering in, as it did in days of old.

Can you imagine what meetings will be like when the glory of God, the smoke of God, enters in again and begins to take control? It isn’t going to be more of yesterday. Little by little, the Lord will turn up the fire. Isaiah said, “Smoke and fire”; Peter quotes Joel and says, “Smoke, fire, and blood.”

I believe that the God who began natural history in Genesis 1 is going to end natural history more dramatically than He began it. Genesis 1 is a serious chapter, and I believe God is going to answer, and in natural history the whole sky will be ablaze with fire. The angels will be all standing and manifesting in the natural realm. Millions of people will be suspended in mid-air, defying gravity. All kinds of things will be happening. The sun will no longer work. In Genesis 1, God hooked the sun up; at the end of the age, He unhooks the sun. The sky, the stars, are all messed up; millions of people will be standing in mid-air; the whole thing will be completely rearranged. I believe God is going to end it with more power than He used when He began it. Certainly there will be more drama. I really believe that. The beauty is coming, and weak, broken, stuck-in-the-mud people are going to be helped and changed. Our spouses, our sons, our daughters, our parents, our cousins, our aunts, our uncles, our friends, our people in the work place, will be changed. Something is coming at a new level; a new order is coming.

MINISTRY TIME

We come before You, Lord.

If you're a thinking person, you're overwhelmed right now. I'm overwhelmed. It seems so distant, there's not the touch of reality, so there's a comfort in the fact that none of it seems real, but it's real. It's already beginning; we're at the beginning of the beginning. The fire is beginning to manifest just a little here and there across the nations.

Lord, we're overwhelmed! Lord, we're troubled that You write names in books and that You take people away from the earth prematurely without informing us, and we don't vote on it. It's people we might love; it might be us. That troubles us; that scares us a little. Your eternity scares us, O God. You decide and operate out of the wisdom of eternity. That frightens us. We have no sense of control over this. Send Your fire, Lord. Send Your fire.

Close your eyes and open your spirit to the Lord. Weak and broken people, we need fire; we need fire. Loose Your fire, Lord. Let us see Your truth. We're slow of hearing, Lord.

From Genesis to Revelation, God said He would do it. He's going to do this. He's not a liar.

Change our paradigms, Lord; change our paradigms. Send the fire, Lord. Those who escape the temporal judgments, the Lord's power will rest upon them in an unprecedented way. They will be set apart for the Lord. Send Your enabling fire, Jesus. Our hearts are bored, Lord. Our hearts are cold, Lord; send the enabling fire.