

## ***Session 3 The Primary and Secondary Causes of a National Crisis***

*Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this session, we're looking at the primary and secondary causes of a national crisis. The reason this is so relevant is because, in the generation in which the Lord returns, the whole earth, every nation of the earth, will experience a very significant national crisis. There will be a spirit of revival breaking out in every nation of the earth as well. It will be the most unique time in history, where a great revival and a great crisis will occur in every single nation of the earth. The accumulated impact of every nation experiencing both the greatest revival and the greatest crisis at the same time—that's what we mean by the unique dynamics of the generation in which the Lord returns. That's why the Lord is raising up forerunners to help people make sense of it ahead of time and then help them process it at the time it occurs. That's what forerunners are about. The book of Joel is a miniature book of Revelation. It's only three chapters, yet many of the primary themes from the Old and New Testament related to the end-time events are in the book of Joel, in this miniature Apocalypse, or this miniature book of Revelation.

### **THE MOST OFFENSIVE DOCTRINE IN THE ENTIRE BIBLE**

We'll start with verse 15, with this key verse. We'll begin soon to get into the verse-by-verse analysis. As a matter of fact, in the next class we'll start it; then the rest of the classes will be going verse by verse through it. This is one more class in which we're still giving an overview of the book. We start in Joel 1:15: the most offensive doctrine in the Bible. Here it is. Joel 1:15: "For the day of the Lord is at hand." Here is the offensive doctrine: "It shall come as destruction from the Almighty" (Joel 1:15). The most offensive doctrine in the Bible is the fact that God judges; that God claims to have the right to set the absolutes, and then the right to determine when and how He confronts that which refuses those absolutes. Often the Church is as troubled by the judgment of God as the world is. The temporal judgments of God, those are the judgments He releases before the second coming. Then the eternal judgments of God are even more offensive.

### **HE NEVER SUSPENDS ONE ATTRIBUTE TO EXECUTE ANOTHER**

Of course, the role of the forerunner is to help make sense of the reality that Jesus is Bridegroom, King and Judge with no contradiction. As a bridegroom, He has great desire for His people; as a king, He has all power; as a judge, He confronts that which opposes love. Bridegroom, King, and Judge—He never suspends one attribute to execute another. In the full unity of His heart, He expresses Himself as Bridegroom, King, and Judge with no contradiction at all. That's a dilemma to the unrenewed mind. That's a dilemma to the mind lacking revelation, how a bridegroom with love can function as a judge with zeal to confront that which is against love while He manifests His power as King.

### **A PLAGUE IN THE LAND AND OFFENSE IN THE HEART**

Paragraph A. This is in Joel's day. Many in Israel were very troubled at the crisis that was occurring, but they were more troubled by Joel's interpretation of the crisis. There was a locust plague, then drought, then raging fire. Because when the drought occurred, there followed dryness, and when lightning would strike, brush fires would start, etc., and then famine brought on starvation. The land was in crisis. It was an economic, it was an agricultural crisis. It was a political crisis. Undoubtedly there were civic issues and tensions because of the food and the money. Then Joel came on the scene and said, "It came from God." They looked at Joel and undoubtedly were so angry. There's no record that tells us what they said, but knowing the human condition, it

wasn't pleasant. The reason it's important for us to study this book and grasp it is because the end-time forerunner messenger will be offensive, just as it was in the days of old. It will be very offensive to see the crisis, and then to attribute the hand of God as having something to do with the crisis. As we'll see in a moment, God isn't fully responsible for the crisis, but He has a role in the crisis that unfolds in that generation, a very significant role. I don't want to minimize His role; neither do I want to set it in a context that's not biblical, because as we'll see in a minute, there are four different contributing factors to a crisis in a nation.

### **GOD BOLDLY TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL HIS JUDGMENTS**

Paragraph B. God doesn't apologize for His judgments. As a matter of fact, He boldly takes responsibility. He says, "It's Me."

Then His servants say, "It's not God! It's not God..."

God says, "It's Me." He says, "Tell them it's Me." He repeats it over and over in the Scriptures. He isn't pleased, paragraph B, when His servants yield to the spirit of the fear of man, because it is the spirit of the fear of man. Sometimes it's just plain lacking knowledge of the Bible; but more often than not, when it's those who are leading national platform ministries, it's the spirit of the fear of man because it's politically incorrect to talk about God's judgments. No one likes the subject; your ratings and the polls will go way down if you agree with God.

Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 13 are the classic chapters describing the false prophets. In our context we would call it "the spirit of a false prophet." A person can be a genuine believer but still operate in the spirit of a false prophet. I don't mean they're not born again; I don't mean they're not sincere; I don't mean they don't have fruit in their ministry, but they still operate in part in the spirit of a false prophet. They're not a false prophet, per se, because that's a little higher level, but they operate in that spirit. They operate in that attitude. Here is what the false prophet said. Jeremiah says, "The false prophets say, 'Peace, peace, good, good! Everything is great. Don't worry'" (Jer. 23:17, paraphrased).

The Lord says, "It's not the truth. It's just not the truth. My prophets in My name are telling everyone these lies and the people are applauding, and no one is preparing." That's in Jeremiah 23:17; it's a classic verse in the main chapter on the whole Bible on the false prophets, along with Ezekiel 13. Those are two "you've got to know these" chapters for forerunners, because they challenge us to hold the standard and be faithful to truth. Then in Jeremiah 23:22, God says this: "If you had told My people the truth, you would have turned many from their sin, but you flattered them so that you could gain the benefit of their approval and they didn't turn from sin. Now the judgment won't be minimized. If you had told the truth, you would have turned some of them" (Jer. 23:22, paraphrased).

Ezekiel 13 says the same thing. The verse that strikes me in this chapter in verse 10: "You say, 'Peace, peace'; you're seducing My people" (Eze. 13:10, paraphrased).

"Everything is good! Everything is good!" Yes, a spirit of revival is coming. Yes we'll have some significant advancement in the kingdom, even in its impact in society. There will be places in spheres of society where great advancements and increase will come, but there will be great calamity at the same time in other places of society. Ezekiel 13:10: "If you tell them it's only good, you're seducing My people. You're seducing them." He goes on to say in verse 22: "My prophets lie. They tell lies to My people and they're not turning My people. As

a matter of fact, they strengthen the heart of My people to do wickedness. I wanted them to convince My people to repent, but they're strengthening wickedness by their lies, by proclamations of 'peace, peace'" (Eze. 13:22, paraphrased).

### **THE DEVIL'S WAY IS ALMOST ALWAYS A HALF-TRUTH**

The good news is, there's an element of breakthrough coming, but it's not the whole truth. Heresy and error isn't just blatant falsehood, but a distortion of truth, a significant distortion of truth. Heresy and deception are half-truths. Half of it is true. The Devil's way is almost always a half-truth. Yes, there's peace if *peace* means breakthrough. A breakthrough is coming; but not only a breakthrough. It's not the whole truth; it's a half truth. It seduces the people of God and it keeps them from turning from sin to wholeheartedness. It's lies.

### **WE DON'T NEED TO HIDE JESUS IN THE CORNER WHEN THE NEIGHBORS COME OVER**

God isn't pleased when His messengers won't agree with Him. God isn't embarrassed about His judgments. We are, but He's not. Honestly, we're embarrassed by them. He's not. It's like when the friends come over; we want to talk about the love of God, the love of God. We do, that's our primary message as a matter of fact, because the judgment of God is an expression of the love of God. He's confronting the things that hinder love. That's what it's about. It's not an opposite of the love of God; it's an expression of the love of God so that love increases. We like to tell everyone about the love of God, which we should. That's our primary message; that's the goal. That's the eternal relationship with God, the ocean of His love. It's like the neighbors come over and we say, "Oh, that one family member that's acting unruly, let's tuck him in the back room. Let's not let the neighbors see this part of God." He's like the drunken uncle that came over. "Let's put Him in the back room and put Him to sleep for an afternoon and invite the neighbors over." We don't need to hide Jesus in the corner. He's not embarrassed about His judgments. We are, but He's not. He is bold about them, because to Him they're love. There's no contradiction to Him; only what appears like a contradiction to the mind without understanding. You could be very sincere and lack understanding on this, and everyone lacks understanding on this to some degree. Because it says in Psalm 36, "Your judgments are like the great deep." They're like the ocean. There are layers and layers of complexity to all the reasons and levels to what He's doing in His judgments. No one grasps all the judgments of God.

### **WE KNOW NOT IN WHAT HOUR GOD'S JUDGMENT WILL COME**

Paragraph C. People like to interpret the crisis simply as a natural disaster. When trouble comes, it's only a natural disaster. They lack a spirit of revelation. There's more going on than a natural disaster. Joel prophesied, "Not only is this from God, this agricultural crisis, but a military crisis is coming around the corner." It probably didn't come for a few decades. In the economy of God, that's a minute later. We don't know how long a span of time it was from the prophecy of military crisis in Joel 2 to the Babylonian invasion. We don't know if it was a few years or even a decade or two. All the scholars know is that when the crisis came, it came in three waves over twenty years. When the Lord says, "I'm about to visit, and it's trouble," He doesn't necessarily mean next month, but to God it's a mere minute. "In a minute I will visit, so be warned."

### **THE LORD WILL DO NOTHING WITHOUT FIRST TELLING HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS**

Another verse I'll add to the notes is Amos 3:7. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, unless His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). One of the key requirements for declaring a natural catastrophe or disaster or crisis in a nation as a judgment of God is that it was told in advance by prophets. It was told in advance with clarity. In Amos 3:7, God says, "I won't do anything unless I tell the prophets first." He means, "I won't do anything of prophetic significance, with salvific or salvation implications. I won't do anything of salvific

importance in My salvation history unless I tell the prophets.” Key things might happen in the nation, but if it relates to the unfolding of the salvation history of God, He says, “I’ll tell the prophets.” If God tells the prophets ahead of time and then it happens in a specific way, we’re mandated to stand in agreement with God.

There are many times undoubtedly when God releases His judgment but doesn’t tell us in advance. On that, we take a step back and we can see God’s hand in it, but we can’t say with clarity, “It was the Lord.” We say, “We know God’s character enough. It’s the sort of thing He’s done in history.” We have to be silent where God has not given us a testimony by the prophets ahead of time. I’m talking about contemporary prophetic voices warning about catastrophes ahead of time.

There are negative things that happen. People say, “What do you think?”

I say, “I don’t know for sure. It looks like a judgment of God. My assumption is that it is, but I can’t be bold about it because I don’t know. According to Amos 3:7, the prophetic word came a few years in advance to give warning of it.” It doesn’t have to be a few years. Why does God tell us in advance? He wanted Israel to know that just as the locust invasion was more than a natural disaster, so the military invasion is more than a political power play. Yes, there are political power plays and nations get invaded, but God is involved in some of these invasions. It’s more than a political power play. He’s judging or disciplining the nation to wake them up in love because He loves them.

### **EL SHADDAI, THE GOD WHO REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT BLESSINGS**

Paragraph E. Notice the phrase, “It’s a destruction from the Almighty” (Joel 1:15, paraphrased). The word *Almighty*, is the name “El Shaddai.” Many of you are familiar with that, the All-Sufficient God. It’s the God who provides the covenant blessings that He promised. The reason Joel uses this name, I believe, is because he’s saying, “God didn’t forget the covenant blessings. He is God El Shaddai. He’s the Almighty. He has power to uphold the covenant. As a matter of fact, it’s the covenant God who is taking away covenant protection in order to wake you up to the covenant because He’s so jealous for the covenant.”

Top of page forty, paragraph F. When the Lord identifies a national crisis as a day of the Lord judgment—in the Scriptures, there are a number of crises, and there aren’t so many, but there are a hundred references to the day of the Lord. When it’s identified as a “day of the Lord” crisis, God is saying, “I am the primary source of that crisis. I want you to know that.” The reason we have several examples in history is so that, now that the Bible is written, the Old and New Testament, for the last 2,000 years, we can look at the canonized examples of God’s judgments. Now that the whole canon of Scripture is in place, as it has been for the last 2,000 years, there’s not new Scripture talking about the events of history. We read the canonized examples and that gives us insight and a framework to understand the contemporary situations: for example, World War II and the greatest tragedy in terms of human death in history, fifty million people in six years. That was one of the greatest judgments of God. Nowhere in the Bible is it called a judgment of God. We look back at similar situations of far less scope, of course; there’s nothing like fifty million people dying in six years in a military exchange like this. We look back at the day of the Lord examples and say, “Ah, this is the model. This is a framework by which we can now interpret contemporary events in our day and in our time.”

### **ISRAEL’S BIGGEST PROBLEM WASN’T BABYLON, BUT GOD**

What God is saying, paragraph F, is that the locust plague, the Babylonian invasion, wasn’t Israel’s greatest problem. If you have a locust plague, it’s a problem because you have the famine and economic crisis. That

wasn't their biggest problem; nor was it even the invasion of a hostile army. Israel's biggest problem as long as they stayed in sin was God. Their problem was God, not Babylon. If they got right with God, Babylon would be taken care of. All the other sources of their problems were but secondary sources; the primary source was God. Again, this is the hugest point of offense to believers and unbelievers. It's God's zeal for love; that's the number one source of these plagues in Joel 1 and Joel 2.

### **YOU CAN'T BIND JESUS IN THE NAME OF JESUS**

Paragraph G. God called the locust invasion in Joel 2:25, "My army." He says, "That's My army."

They said, "Your army? We stood up in the name of Jesus and bound it!" You can't bind Jesus in the name of Jesus. You can repent, cry out for mercy, and get His favor in the name of Jesus, but you can't bind Jesus in the name of Jesus. That's the dilemma in which many end up when the Lord is the primary source. He's not the only source, but the primary source. We have believers binding Jesus in the name of Jesus without knowing it. They're in confusion and there's no answer because the answer is God's favor.

### **THE BLESSEDNESS AND FAVOR OF LIVING IN AGREEMENT WITH GOD**

God's favor He gives in Christ, but the condition on which He gives Christ and the spirit of being in Christ is that we live in agreement with God. That we are in Christ is a free gift, but that free gift, when properly received and understood, motivates us to live in agreement with God's heart. Then all is well. When people are in Christ but not motivated to live in agreement with God, God says, "You need My favor on the land, believers and unbelievers alike. You need My favor on the nation, the region, the continent. You need Me to break in with favor; that's what you need. I will give favor when their relationship with Me is honored by My people in those geographic areas."

### **IS IT GOD, MAN, THE DEVIL, OR A COMBINATION OF ALL? KNOWING HOW TO RESPOND**

Paragraph H. God wants His people to know He's the one acting. The people don't know that God is the primary source behind various crises—not every crisis, but various ones. They won't respond in the right way. If they only think it's the Devil, they rebuke the Devil. If it's God and they're rebuking the Devil, they're trying to bind Jesus in Jesus' name. It's confusing; it doesn't change anything. If it's only the Devil, then their approach to the problem is only to rebuke the Devil—have prayer meetings and rebuke the Devil. That's part of the solution, but that's not the whole solution if God is part of the crisis. If it's only evil men, if what happened in a terrorist attack is only evil men, then we get better security strategies and guard the nation better. That's a right thing to do, by the way. If it's only evil men, we get better security. If it's only the Devil, we get prayer meetings that focus on the Devil. If it's God, if He's involved as well, then we have to search ourselves as the people of God and line up with God. Therein is the primary answer. You don't do that if God isn't in the equation in your thinking. If God never judges as some think, then there's no thought of searching ourselves in terms of where our relationship with God is. There's searching for answers in the prophetic realm as to what the Devil's strategy is, or searching for better security or economic methods where they out to be searching out their relationship with God. They don't focus on the right area if they don't have a paradigm that God is involved in it. It really matters.

### **"THEY REBELLED AND GRIEVED HIS SPIRIT; SO HE... FOUGHT AGAINST THEM"**

Paragraph J. God fights against His enemies. God's main enemy is sin. Look at Isaiah 63:10 this is intense. This is talking about the children of Israel, the covenant people. "They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy" (Is. 63:10). God says, "I became their enemy; I fought against

them” The whole story, if you’re going to interpret it rightly, is that Israel put itself in an adversarial position by resisting God. God loved them; God wanted to relate to them. They said, “No.” They put themselves in an adversarial position. It says, “God became an enemy.” That doesn’t mean God had an intrinsic animosity against them; that’s not what he means. Isaiah is saying that God became an enemy of their purposes as a nation which didn’t have God as their center. He says, “I don’t dislike the individuals, but when a nation I’ve called like this won’t put Me in the center, I become the enemy of their national purposes and agenda. I’m the One resisting them to wake them up because I love them so much.”

### **HE LOVES US ENOUGH TO FIGHT AGAINST US IF WE WON’T WAKE UP**

In Revelation 2:16, Jesus appears to John. He delivers a message to the church of Pergamos. He says in essence, “Tell the church of Pergamos that I, the Lord, will fight against them. I love them, but I’ll fight against them. I will contend with them to wake them up if they don’t repent of their immorality. I love them enough to fight against them. They’re putting themselves in an adversarial relationship to Me. I love them too much to walk away. I the Lord Jesus, in the new covenant, after the resurrection, will fight against them because I won’t let them go on without contending for their heart. I’m coming after them.”

### **THE OFFENSIVENESS TO THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE OF JUDGMENT**

Paragraph K. God’s role in judgment is so controversial. You have to know that. If you’re saying yes or even in the early stages of saying yes to the forerunner calling, the messenger calling, the message is that Jesus is Bridegroom, King and Judge. Jesus is Bridegroom, King, and Judge—the unique dynamics of the generation of the Lord’s return and the great revival, but also the great trouble. Of that message, the heavy burden is the judgment part of it. When we talk about Jesus the Bridegroom, a few people say, “Bah, humbug!” When we talk about Jesus the King with power, most everyone applauds that because they imagine the power making their life better. They’re thinking, “Hey, cool. But Jesus as the One who confronts with zeal, I don’t know. If I agree with that, then my popularity will go down.” A preacher’s popularity will go down on earth, but God in heaven has pleasure that we agree with Him; we’re not embarrassed by Him. We take our stand for who He is and what the Scripture says.

### **GOD WILL USE THE LEAST SEVERE MEANS TO REACH THE GREATEST NUMBER**

Here is what we can be sure of, here at the end of paragraph K. God will use the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love. That’s a sentence I’ve said over and over through the years. He will use the least severe means. If there’s a crisis in the nation, though it looks severe, God says, “That was the least severe means I could employ to retain the impact in order to win the largest number at the deepest level of love. I won’t violate their free will. I won’t make them say yes. I’ll make them stop and pay attention and ask questions, but I won’t make them say yes. I can get them in a corner where they have to think on it.”

Beloved, you don’t want to get in a corner where you’re forced to think on it. God won’t force you to say yes, but He will force even His people to think on things. He gives them a little time out; He distracts them from their personal agenda by another agenda so that they have to think it through because He loves us so much.

### **GOD’S RAGE, MAN’S SIN, SATAN’S RAGE, AND CREATION’S GROANING**

Roman numeral II. Here are the four factors. We’ll mention these over and over. The question always comes down to these four factors and God’s zeal. They overlap, by the way, in a national crisis. God’s zeal, Satan’s rage, man’s sin, creation’s groans—these are the four factors, and many times they overlap. Not always, but

many times. It's hard to discern the percentage of the overlap. "Is it twenty-five percent all around?" No, it doesn't work that way. In one situation it's more demonic attack and less the judgment of God. In another situation it's more the judgment of God and less demonic attack. We don't know, but often all four of them are present. Someone may say, "Give me the breakdown. What percent is God?" You can't. The real issue is that if we turn with all our heart, the one response works for every single one of those four problems. Turning to God and getting in the place of His favor is the successful response to whichever one of those four are contributing or whatever the percentage is of the way they come together. Remember Joel 2:12-14; crying out is always the answer.

### **WE HAVE TO BE PEOPLE OF SPIRITUAL REVELATION BEFORE WE CAN HAVE BOLDNESS**

We don't have to know. Someone says, "Hurricane Katrina, was it mostly God or mostly the Devil?"

I say, "I don't know. I didn't hear a prophecy ahead of time that God was going to judge that city. I don't know that it was God's judgment in terms of a clear prophecy ahead of time, but it certainly looks like it to me. My assumption is that the judgment of God was in it." That's a very strong assumption by the way. Was it mostly the judgment of God or mostly the rage of Satan or mostly creation's groaning? I don't know and I don't want to go past the point of understanding and revelation. We need to be silent when we simply don't know. On some occasions we'll have great clarity. Other occasions, in a very similar crisis, we won't have clarity. Every situation will have its own unique makeup of what was behind it. We have to be people of spiritual revelation before we can have boldness.

### **FAITHFUL WITNESSES OF HIS GLORIOUS HEART AND BRILLIANT MIND**

Some people are so excited about the judgment message, they want to say, "Judge, judge, judge." They want to get out there, make a name for themselves, make a splash in the water, have everyone SAY, "Rrr, rrr, rrr," and get a lot of attention. That's not the goal. The goal isn't to show how bold and strong we are; the goal is to be in agreement with God. Normally that really overzealous, bold approach works for a few years. Then people say, "Whoa, that's way too heavy; we had better back up and try another approach." Over the years I've seen a few men break out there and get really excited about judgment. They will be fearless and never back down. For them, everything is judgment; they're high on zeal, low on discernment, low on impact, and low on longevity as well. They die out after two or three years. Then they say, "Whoa, that was a bad decision. OK." This isn't bravado stuff, to show that we're not afraid, that we don't fear man, that we don't care what man says. That's not it. We want to be faithful witnesses of His glorious heart and brilliant mind. His heart is filled with love; His mind is so brilliant. His muscles, His power is amazing. We want to be witnesses to that. We don't want to be witnesses to how bold we are and how unafraid we are of someone we say, "Watch. Watch this one." That's not it. That's just the flesh.

### **GOD DISCIPLINES HIS PEOPLE BECAUSE HE WANTS RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM**

Paragraph B, God's zeal, God's zeal for relationship. He disciplines His people because He wants relationship with them. It's a relational reality; it's a relational problem. God's judgment isn't only relational for His people in that sense. He also judges to deliver the oppressed, and that's relational as well. Sometimes it's to wake up the redeemed so that they wake up in love. Other times it's to deliver the oppressed. Those are two different facets of why He breaks in with judgment. It's not always to wake people up only; many times it's to deliver the oppressed. Oftentimes they overlap, even while the Devil's rage is involved as well.

Page forty-one. The second factor is Satan's rage. Revelation 12:12. in the generation in which the Lord returns, in those final years before the Lord returns, Satan will have great rage. It says *wrath*; you could put the word *rage* or *anger*, "because he knows that he has a short time" (Rev. 12:12). That's specifically the last three and a half years. He will have so much anger and rage. That rage he has now—that rage will really intensify. God allows Satan to vent his fury more than at any other time in history, in those final years relating to the Lord's return. That fury is already building. God in His sovereignty sets the boundaries in which Satan can operate. Satan doesn't have a free reign. God says, "Within these boundaries you can vent your rage. Inasmuch as My people walk in agreement with Me, you'll be restrained and hindered." Even though He gives the enemy boundaries, He tells His people, "You can contest those boundaries by the authority you have individually, but especially collectively. You can resist the activity and rage of Satan in different geographic areas." There are many levels going on all at one time.

### **THE HONOR AND DIGNITY GOD GIVES TO MEN AND WOMEN IN GRANTING FREE WILL**

Paragraph D. The third factor is man's sin. People really do violent acts. People with a free will really do wrong things. God puts so much dignity on the free will of man; He puts so much dignity on it that He literally lets people act against His will. Again, there are certain boundaries, but they really get to act out their love or their hatred. People can really live in immorality if they want. He says, "I will let you. It won't go well for you; but I won't stop you. I can get you in a corner and hem you in for a while and make you think about it, but I won't make you say no to it. It's your choice." Those choices, whether of violence or immorality or covetousness, really do affect other people in a world in which God gives every human being a free will. It's a real battle zone down here. It's real. It's not a practice game; it's not just poetry. The battle is real. Men and women have real free wills.

### **MAN'S FREE WILL IS THE LEGAL ENTRY POINT OF ANGELS AND DEMONS**

I have here, paragraph E, that the man's free will is the legal entry point into the natural realm of angels and demons. In other words, you get a human being down on the earth who chooses righteousness in the name of Jesus. It opens up doors for more angelic activity. If they choose sin, even as believers, it opens up doors for more demonic activity to touch their world and that which they influence. Our decisions are very, very real. The consequences are real. By choosing righteousness, you don't feel good about it, you feel left out and bummed out, but you still choose righteousness, I tell you that you're opening legal points of entry for angelic ministry and the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. No matter how bad a mood you're in, when you choose, you choose. It's a legal action; it opens the door for blessing. You can feel bad all the way in it. I've made choices for righteousness and it sure didn't feel very anointed. It doesn't have to feel anointed in the hour of choosing, because it's a legal access point for the realm of God's glory to touch my life and those I impact, or your life and those you impact.

It's the same with the demonic. A believer can choose the wrong stuff and demons are involved more. They really impact their friends and family. They really do. It's real.

### **THE FULL MANIFESTATION OF THE DELIVERANCE OF CREATION IS STILL TO COME**

Paragraph F. The fourth contributing factor, Romans 8, is creation's groaning. Creation itself will be delivered. Did you know creation needs deliverance? The created order will be delivered one day. The cross has already paid the price. It has already been purchased, but the created order still needs deliverance. The full manifestation of the deliverance is yet future, though the price has been paid and the title deed is in the hand of the Lamb with the scroll with the seven seals. The title deed is in Jesus' hand. Creation will be "delivered from

the bondage of corruption to the glorious liberty of the children of God.” We know that the whole created order, the land, the atmosphere, the sea, the whole created order groans: “The whole created order labors until now.” The groaning and the laboring of the created order is weather patterns, storms, volcanoes, earthquakes. It’s the earth saying, “We don’t like that the human race brought sin onto the planet, because we’re under their authority. We don’t like this.” Because God placed the earth under Adam’s dominion. Then Adam opened the doors to Satan, so the earth was impacted. There’s trouble everywhere across the earth. The trouble is more than any one individual in any one place. When the weather or earthquake or hurricane hits, it affects the righteous and the unrighteous. We have a connectedness that many people don’t understand. There’s a connectedness we have to each other as humans, to each other in geographic areas, to each other in this generation. We’re connected more than we think by our actions. It’s not entirely like, if you do well, no earthquake will ever hit you. You know, when the earthquake hits, it’ll only hit the house next to you and the house on the other side. Your house will stand in midair and be completely safe. It doesn’t exactly work that way, because we’re connected together in a fallen world. Part of this is that when the other men aren’t pressing into God, it’s going to impact your life. True. We’re connected. If the Body of Christ doesn’t wake up, the Body of Christ as a whole feels the backlash of it. For those who understand what’s happening, part of their task is to wake up the others, because together we make a greater impact. It’s not just that more people get saved. I’m talking about more safety and creation itself in our geographic areas receives the impact of it. Again, it’s a vast subject; it’s a glorious subject. When Adam sinned, a curse came on the ground. The more man sins, the more the curse escalates in its manifest impact on the land.

#### **“THE EARTH IS DEFILED UNDER ITS INHABITANTS”**

Isaiah 24:5-6 speaks of the generation in which the Lord returns. “The earth is... defiled under its inhabitants” (Is. 24:5). The land, the sea, the atmosphere are defiled under the sins of the people who live in those geographic areas, because they sinned. Therefore, the curse devours more and more of the earth. The curse devours some regions of the earth more than other regions of the earth related to the sin in those geographic areas. It’s not fully like, if your neighborhood does well, you’re great, and if your neighborhood does badly, you’re in trouble. It’s more than that. There’s a mysterious connectedness of the human family to one another and even to the geography of the earth.

The Lord says, “You cry out for My favor. It will make a big difference.”

You say, “OK, what’s the critical mass? What’s the turning point? If we get 1,000, are we all safe or mostly safe? Or is it 2,000? What’s the number?”

The Lord never gives that number. He says, “You just keep getting more people on board.”

“Come on, Lord tell us. What’s the number? How many intercessors do we get?” It’s not the number of people we get at the one meeting. That’s not exactly it. It’s how many people we get in geographic areas and nations who will say yes to God and line up with Him. “Is it one percent, two, three? What’s the number?”

The Lord’s answer typically is, “I’m not telling you. You press in and you get others to press in and you leave it to Me, because I’m a wise and loving God.”

It does matter if the others press in; we’re impacted by the rest of the response of the Body of Christ. We don’t need the whole Body of Christ to respond rightly, but there’s a number (I don’t know the percentage), a place in

the wisdom and government of God where more protection happens when His people collectively respond together.

**AS MUCH AS YOU HAVE STRENGTH, WAKE UP YOUR BROTHER**

“Well I wish it was just me and my situation.”

The Lord says, “No, I’m a Father. I have a family. I care about My family; My family is one to Me. Go wake up your brother. You are your brother’s keeper.” The verse in Genesis 4 indicates that we have responsibility to help wake up our brother. It actually impacts us if they wake up. If they don’t wake up, it actually impacts us.

“Always?”

Not always.

“Most of the time?”

Not sure.

“How much of the time?”

I don’t know.

“Ahh! What’s the answer?”

Wake up your brother.

“How much?”

As much as you have strength, wake them up.

“Well I wish I knew the day and the hour of His coming, how many people I have to wake up and where.”

It doesn’t work that way. He says, “I will leave those things undefined. You come after Me. You’ll be glad. You’ll never regret coming after Me hard and waking up people. Just trust Me.”

You can read the rest of Isaiah 24; it’s pretty intense. It’s talking about the end of the age, where few men are left, at the end of verse 6, and about a death toll across the nations that’s unprecedented.

**WE REPENT OF OUR SIN, REBUKE THE DEVIL, AND SUBMIT OURSELVES TO GOD**

Turn to the top of page forty-two. Paragraph J. Well, how do we respond to these four contributing factors to a national crisis? First, we receive God’s correction with humility. We say yes to God; we agree with Him. We resist the Devil: “In the name of Jesus, I rebuke you.” We repent of sin. Then I can add, there’s a human dimension of making precautions, meaning that when terrorist attacks happen, nations do put security measures in place. That’s legitimate. There are natural things to do; there are precautions that we take. Someone asked the other day, “If a big weather storm is coming, do you get provisions? Do you get some extra water and stuff?”

Yes, it's just "Book of Proverbs" wisdom. There are things we can do that are precautions because we see man sinning more. We get locks on our doors; we take measures, but that won't get us all the way there. Those human practical measures are important. We repent of our sin, rebuke the Devil, and submit ourselves to God. We don't want to get those out of order. We don't want to be rebuking the Devil when God says, "Wrong conversation right now. You should be talking to Me about you, not to the Devil about the problem. You need to be talking to Me about you right now and about My people."

Again, I typically believe they all go together. I can't say every time, but it's a good approach just to assume all these responses we should take hold of in our life together.

### **IT IS THE LAMB WHO UNLOOSES THE SEALS FOR THE GREAT DAY OF WRATH**

Paragraph K. Jesus is the primary actor and the primary cause of the judgments in the book of Revelation. It's the Lamb, Jesus, who opens the seals for the great day of wrath. Paragraph L. It's not the Devil breaking the seven seals; it's Jesus. He's revealing Himself as the Lamb. The Judge in the book of Revelation is a Lamb. He's as meek and filled with love as a lamb. That's why He's a judge, because He cares about love.

Paragraph M. There are so many verses; we don't hear them often, but there are so many verses where God takes full responsibility for His judgments. He's not ashamed of them. We are, but He's not.

### **THE LORD MAKES PEACE, CREATES CALAMITY, AND SUMMONS JUDGMENT**

Isaiah 45: "I make peace and create calamity." That's not a completely balanced statement; there are other places in Scripture where He attributes calamity to the Devil and men as well. Evil men doing evil things hurt people. They really hurt people in exercising their free will in a wrong way. But God says, "I create calamity. It's part of what I do."

Amos 3:6: "If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?" There are so many verses in the Bible about this. We get real shy about it because it's politically incorrect on steroids. It's politically incorrect.

"Well, what about the New Testament Jesus?"

The New Testament Jesus has zero contradiction to the Old Testament God. He's the exact same God. There's no contradiction. That's all an argument presented in men's minds so that they can dismiss the judgments of God. The idea is that God is different now; that somewhere God changed. The God who changes not, changed somehow. Absolutely not. He is a God of perfect love in the Old Testament and a God of perfect love in the New. He is a God of justice in the Old and a God of justice in the New. He's the exact same God. We don't have a new God. He didn't change His personality; He didn't go through a twelve-step program. He's exactly the same God. There's nothing renewed in Him. He doesn't need it.

### **JESUS IS DESTINED FOR THE FALL OF MANY**

I'll give you a few verses on the Jesus of the New Testament. Look at Luke 2:34. Simeon prophesied over Him as a baby, "He will be destined for the fall of many." The New Testament Jesus will be destined for the fall of many. Because of Him and the response of the people to Him, many will fall. That's negative. In Luke 19:43-44, Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This is the New Testament Jesus prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem, just as Joel prophesied the destruction in Joel 2 of Jerusalem. It's the New Testament

Jesus prophesying here. In Luke 12:49-51, Jesus said, “I came to send fire. I didn’t come to bring peace; I came to bring division” (Lk. 12:49, paraphrased). Of course He came to bring peace as well; He’s the Prince of Peace.

He doesn’t give the full council of His will in every passage; He emphasizes different facets. We bring the whole council of Scripture together to get the whole picture. He said He came to bring fire. Fire is bad. It’s not good fire here; it’s talking about fire on the earth. In Luke 9, only a few chapters earlier, James and John wanted to call fire down from heaven. He told them, “You have a wrong spirit, because your motive was wrong and your reason was wrong.” Here in Luke 12 He says, “I’ll call fire down at the right time. Fire is on My agenda.” We know that from Acts 2. You know the verse about the wine of the Spirit. He said, “Blood, fire, and smoke are the primary signs of the end-time move of God.” Blood? Fire? Smoke? The fire of the Holy Spirit in the prayer meetings, perhaps? I think the smoke means cities burning. Yes, I would go for fire on us in the meetings, too, but that fire means more than feeling the power on our hearts in the meetings, though it does mean that as well, because right there in Acts 2, the fire of God came on them. Jesus didn’t limit it to fire imparting something to our hearts. Smoke is in cities when that fire hits.

### **THE JESUS OF CHRISTMAS IS THE JESUS OF ARMAGEDDON**

This is the Jesus of the New Covenant. He said, “I came to bring division.”

“Are you not the Prince of Peace?”

“Yes, I have to bring division in order to establish lasting peace. I have to make men decide. Then, when they’ve decided, I’ll bring peace among those who line up with Me.”

Of course the big one is Revelation 19:19-21, where all the kings of the earth come to one geographic area of Jerusalem and He kills all of them. Whoa. We’re talking about the Jesus of the New Testament. He kills them all—Jesus! The Jesus of Christmas is the Jesus of Armageddon. He’s the same exact Man. It’s true. The Jesus who brings goodwill to all men is the Jesus who confronts evil in the nations in order to bring good will to all men.

We’ll bring this to an end. There are a few more pages, but I’m just going to summarize them for you.

### **THE BEST HOMELAND SECURITY IS SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES**

Roman numeral III. The most terrifying problem for a nation, a nation that lives in sin, isn’t terrorists. Their biggest problem is God’s zeal for relationship with them. I’m talking about if they don’t want to repent. If they repent, it’s their greatest asset, their greatest privilege. If they don’t repent and God’s zeal won’t back up, they’re in a heap of trouble. They can get homeland security going. That’s not funny. Well, it might be funny. It’s sincere, I mean. It’s not a joke. The best homeland security is solemn assemblies. For real! It’s true: Getting God’s favor on the land isn’t the only strategy, but it’s the best one. The cheapest way to save a nation is to fund intercessors to cry out to God. That’s far cheaper. That may cost a few billion, but it won’t cost a hundred billion. It’s way cheaper and way easier and a whole lot more fun, but it’s homeland security. It’s real, it’s not a joke. It’s not the whole plan, but it should be at the front of the plan.

### **OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE IS THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

Top of page forty-three. Our first line of defense as a nation is the people of God. In other words, it's not those old sinners in California or Missouri or Florida or anywhere; it's the Body of Christ God is looking at. Yes, He's looking at sin in society. He looks at sin in society amongst the unbelievers, but the thing that troubles Him most is the passivity of His covenant people to those sins and their participation in them. God says, "You're in covenant with Me. You're participating in the sins, fully or in part in various ways, and you're passive. You're not concerned that they exist. You're not stirring up anyone to take a stand against them. You won't agree with Me boldly for them. You won't cry out with Me against them." The number one point of responsibility in a land is for the covenant people to break their participation, to break all their agreement, to take a stand against it, tenderly. I don't mean with an angry spirit—tenderly, but boldly, and to rally their resources to gather the people together, because it takes time and energy to gather together to pray and fast. It's a hassle to do it in the flesh. I don't just mean you're hungry: It takes money; it takes time. If you take time to go to the prayer meetings, there are other things you can't be doing. You missed good opportunities because you drove over to the prayer meeting. It's all time-consuming and costs a lot of money.

The Lord says, "I want My people lining up with Me, not a little, but fully in agreement with Me. If they do it, I will heal the land. I will give grace to those outside the community." The problem in a nation is when the covenant people who understand God's heart and have relationship with Him are passive or participating in the very things that the unbelievers are indulging in.

#### **THE HEART OF THE JUDGE IN JOEL IS GRACIOUS, KIND, AND MERCIFUL**

Paragraph B. In this passage, Joel 2:2-13, God says, "I want you to turn to Me." He says, "With all your heart, turn to Me." This is the heart of the Judge: He's gracious, and kind, and merciful, and He relents. The heart of the Judge in the book of Joel is tender and kind. He wants relationship. He doesn't give up on us; He's fighting for us. That's why sometimes He fights us, because He's fighting for us.

#### **IF WE ONLY FOCUS ON SECONDARY CAUSES, WE ONLY HAVE SECONDARY SOLUTIONS**

Paragraph D. We often focus on secondary causes and not the primary cause. A national crisis can't be solved by removing only the secondary causes. We can get better security, and we need to do that as a nation. We can get better economic systems; we need to do that as a nation as well, but those are secondary causes. We need to look at them, but not at the expense of denying the primary cause, which is our relationship to God. God doesn't look at a nation and say, "You aren't wise on your security plans, and that's why you have trouble." Our problem isn't our lack of wisdom, though we have profound lack of wisdom as humans. God says, "With My favor, I will make up a lot that you lack in wisdom; you just get My favor upon cities and nations, etc."

Paragraph E, if we only focus on secondary causes, we only come up with secondary solutions. We can march on Washington. Good. We can picket abortion clinics. That's good; I've done it many times. We can call our senators and write letters. These are good. They do make an impact. They're really right to do this, but they don't solve the primary dilemma: God looking at a region, and particularly at His people. We don't go to the unbelievers and point our fingers: "You immoral people! You get right with God."

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!"

That's not exactly it. "Get My people connected with Me, walking in the first commandment, standing in the gap in their covenantal authority, crying out to Me for mercy in meekness, and I will do surprising things to get those sinners."

My focus is on us. We want to win the unbelievers and we want to transform society, but I want to focus on getting us lined up with the first commandment in our covenant role, crying out for God to release favor and mercy in that priestly and kingly position, and many things will happen in the land. I believe great things will happen. Amen.