

Why A Sacred Assembly on October 31-November 2?

I. AMERICA—A NATION IN CRISIS

- A. The Lord is disciplining the church in America by giving her the president that she wants and who reflects who she is. The result of the presidential election is designed to wake up the Church.
- B. When God’s discipline and judgments are released, many wake up to righteousness (Isa. 26:9).
⁹For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. (Isa. 26:9)
- C. Several Christian leaders have indicated, “*This is a one-issue election*”—the supreme court judges. The most serious threat over America is the 55 million abortions (since Roe Vs. Wade in 1973).
- D. The election reflects two polarized camps in America. It is a harbinger of more trouble to come. This election has unleashed a spirit of bold, harsh rhetoric that will result in violence becoming far more common in the days to come. New levels of harsh speech will become the norm (Jude 15). The resulting offense and bitterness has many implications—division and civil strife will increase.
¹⁴Behold, the Lord comes...¹⁵to execute judgment on...the harsh things...spoken against Him. (Jude 1:14-15)
- E. Scripture teaches what response God requires when a nation is in crisis (Joel 2:12-17). We are to gather for prayer with fasting to cry out to God for mercy, deliverance, and revival. The Lord wants the heart of His people more than anything else. He wants all of our love (Mt. 22:37).
¹³...Return to the Lord for He is gracious and merciful...and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm...¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;¹⁶gather the people...¹⁷let them say, “Spare Your people, O Lord...” (Joel 2:13-17)
- F. The Lord does not leave us guessing as to what He desires from us. This brings us confidence! We can act with certainty in times of crisis, knowing that our solution is found in God. Even the most untrained and ungifted can repent with prayer and fasting to freely receive God’s favor.
- G. The fate of a nation is determined most by how God’s people in that nation respond to God.
¹²Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him...¹³“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,¹⁴if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will...forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chr. 7:12-14)
- H. God opens doors of blessing and closes doors of oppression in response to our prayers. There are blessings that God has chosen to give, but only if His people rise up in the partnership of prayer.
¹⁸The LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on High to have compassion...¹⁹He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer. (Isa. 30:18-19; NAS)

- I. The prayers of God's people over history are stored in golden bowls before His throne (Rev. 5:8). As a godly minority in a nation presses into God, often multitudes in the Church eventually follow. God has released two great awakenings in America—First (1730-1750); Second (1800-1840).
- J. The Lord relents from doing harm. In other words, He will cancel the decree of judgment. There are two stages in God's decrees: first, the decree is established in the heavenly court. Second, it is issued as God releases angels to execute the judgment (Ezek. 9-10), or the judgment is canceled. God desires to transform a would-be disaster zone in a geographic area into a "revival center."
¹Gather yourselves together...²before the decree [of judgment] is issued...before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you...³Seek the LORD ...it may be that you will be hidden [protected from judgment] in the day of the LORD's anger. (Zeph. 2:1-3)
- K. A looming disaster in a nation can be changed (Gen. 18:22-32; Ex. 32: 9-14; 2 Sam. 12:15-23; 24:10-14; 2 Chr. 34:22-28; Jer. 18:7-10; 51:6-8; Ezek. 18:21, 22, 28; 33:10-14; Dan. 4:29; Amos 5:1-3, 14-15; 7:1-6; Zeph. 2:1-3; Hab. 3:16-19; Jon. 3:4-10; Mal. 3:16-4:6).
- L. Habakkuk prayed for God to release His mighty deeds with mercy after hearing of God's terrifying plan to send the Babylonian army to Israel to administer His discipline to wake up His people.
²LORD, I have heard of Your fame; I stand in awe of Your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy. (Hab. 3:2, NIV)

II. EXAMPLES OF RESPONDING TO GOD IN HUMILITY AND AVOIDING JUDGMENT

- A. Ahab was one of the most wicked kings in Israel's history (he died in 852 BC). He humbled himself and received mercy. This is an amazing example of how far God's mercy will reach.
*²¹"Behold, I will bring calamity on you...you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin."...²⁵But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness...²⁷So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he...fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.²⁸And the word of the Lord came to Elijah...saying,²⁹"See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days."
(1 Kgs. 21:21-29)*
- B. Manasseh was also one of the most wicked kings in Israel's history (he died in 642 BC). He humbled himself and received God's mercy when facing God's judgment (2 Chr. 33:6-13).
⁹So Manasseh seduced Judah...to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed...¹¹Therefore the Lord brought upon them...the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks...and carried him off to Babylon.¹²Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,¹³ and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty...and brought [restored] him back to Jerusalem... (2 Chr. 33:9-13)
- C. The Lord has sent great revivals to rebellious cities: Jerusalem (Acts 2-5); Ephesus (Acts 19).
¹⁰And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus...¹¹Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul...and the evil spirits went out of them...²⁰So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:10-20)