

Sometimes I wonder if we haven't already surpassed the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, I believe if you could gain a congressman's confidence, get him alone and have him spill out his heart to you, he would confess, "It's worse than anyone can imagine. It's hopeless. Things are out of control, and it's just a matter of time before our problems bury us!"

Ecologists have become the modern-day doomsayers. According to them, our planet is disintegrating. Acid rain is ruining forests; topsoil is vanishing; rain forests are being cut down; the ozone layer is evaporating. With the drastic weather and famines we've experienced of late, it appears we are headed for the "greenhouse effect."

There is so much bad news, so many warnings, so many nerve-racking crises, we can't compute it all. So we simply decide to turn it all off! For most people, TV has become the great escape from reality. Others use alcohol and drugs to dull the mind and find temporary relief.

Christians see the satanic warfare going on in America and can't believe it's happening so fast - and so blatantly! Here in New York City, homosexuals were honored recently as the Empire State Building was lit up with lavender-colored lights. All the while, these homosexuals are becoming more militant and violent.

Politicians, economists, writers and the masses who live here say, "New York City is going to hell in a handbasket. The devil himself has become king - and the city is dying fast!"

God Needs You Now!

A Tidal Wave of Sin is Flooding Our Nation

I think the majority of Christians here would like to escape to some safe, quiet hideaway in the mountains to keep from being tainted by all the iniquity surrounding them. Many despair, saying, "What can one Christian do about all this moral degradation? What can one church do in such a huge, wild and wicked city? It's enough for me just to stay close to Jesus, so I don't get carried away with the flood..."

"Is there really anything I can do - a poor, insignificant Christian like me? I have no money, no training, no influence - only a great love for Jesus!"

We often expect God to move in one of two ways: Either by sending a supernatural outpouring of His Holy Spirit to sweep multitudes into His kingdom; or by sending judgement to bring people to their knees or destroy them.

But beloved, that's not God's method of changing things in an evil day. His way of rebuilding ruins has always been to use ordinary men and women whom He has touched. And He does this by filling them with His Holy Spirit and sending them into the warfare with great faith and power!

God uses people, not angels, to proclaim His Word to the lost! Yet the Lord has not done much about the sins of this generation because He hasn't yet found believers des-

perate enough to seek the fullness of the Holy Ghost and power!

The Church has been cheated during the past fifty years by men who sought God's power for fame and personal glory. They lined their pockets with money and gave themselves proud titles: "Full of Faith and Power," "Man of the Hour," "Miracle Worker" - while passing out blessings for a fee! I call it charismatic indulgences.

We made little gods out of them and idolized them. Now we're giving the same status to a new generation of prophets!

No wonder the devil continues undisturbed - smirking, unimpressed by all the talk of power and authority in the Church. The Church has done a very wicked thing! Like Israel, we have wanted a human king. Christians sit back in the congregation and watch the pastor or evangelist do what all believers are called to do!

Yet even now the Holy Ghost is bringing down all the stars and dethroning all the religious kings. He is destroying spiritual empires, literally spewing out of His mouth all ministerial idolatry!

God Is Doing as He Has From the Beginning - Making Two Important Moves!

First, He is raising up a holy, apostolic ministry, consisting of

men totally given to the Word and prayer. They do not lord it over anyone. They are weeping men with hearts that are rent with no plan in mind but to seek, hear and obey God!

Second, God is calling you into immediate service. He needs the common man, the layman! He uses people whom the high priests would call *"...unlearned and ignorant men."* (ACTS 4:13).

The Bible also says that in the Upper Room at Pentecost, *"...they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..."* (ACTS 2:4). All became mighty in battle - all were bold, powerful witnesses! These Spirit-filled believers did not include just Peter, James, John and the other well-known disciples, but also the widows, the young, the servants and the handmaidens!

We know that Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost - *"full of faith and power"* (ACTS 6:8). He was not an apostle nor an ordained minister. In fact, he was chosen to serve tables for the church so the disciples could devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Stephen was an ordinary man full of the Spirit of God!

And what of Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, all of whom served tables. They all were laymen! Scripture says they were *"full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom"* (ACTS 6:3).

Philip also was a layman and a table-server. Yet he too was full of the Holy Ghost. Scripture tells us he went to Samaria where he preached on the streets, prayed for the sick, cast out demons and believed the Lord to raise the lame and crippled. *"And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.... And there was great joy in that city."* (ACTS 8:6,8).

God's plan to save Samaria was a man full of the Holy Ghost and power! Philip was a man so humble, so filled with Jesus, that he could leave great works in Jerusalem and Samaria - and go by God's leading to one man in the desert! (See Acts 8:26-40.)

How is God going to witness to New York, the modern Babylon - a city full of crime, drugs, homosexuality, hatred, violence and godlessness? He won't do it just by great preaching, no matter how convincing and piercing it may be. He won't do it by church meetings alone, nor by powerful worship and lively praise, nor even by a Holy Ghost shaking of the house!

God will proclaim Himself in New York City the same way He wants to in your city or town - through the witness of all who go out into the highways and byways to preach His gospel!

God's testimony here in New York is not that we have church in a theater on Broadway. It is not that we have a packed house. It is not that we experience glory or incredible showers of blessing. It is through men and women, widows, unemployed, rich and poor alike - all laymen whom God stirs."

You are God's witness to your city! He uses laymen who get alone with Him, are stirred in their hearts, seek Him in prayer, rend their hearts - and go forth like Philip, full of the Holy Ghost, faith and power!

If God has not been using you, it's probably because you have not been usable. That's what happens to believers who get "caught up in gazing at the glory."

The disciples basked in the glory when Jesus was taken up into heaven. They could have stood there forever, enjoying the warm glow, but the angel of the Lord lovingly rebuked them: *"Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"* (ACTS 1:11).

There is a danger in wanting to sit inside the church "gazing at the glory." Jesus told His disciples, "Wait on Me. You need the Holy Ghost and power. I need you to be My witnesses!"

Get Your Eyes Off the Times and Seasons, Which Are In the Father's Power Alone!

As soon as the disciples heard about receiving a baptism of power, they asked, *"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"* (ACTS 1:6).

Jesus answered in no uncertain terms: *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."* (VERSE 7).

Stop and think about what their question implied: "Lord, You mean beginning in that room, with just us, You will restore the kingdom of Israel? Are we to be the ones to bring down Herod and Rome? Are we the ones to cleanse the land, set up the kingdom and bring You back?"

We know that Jesus had to deal with some of the disciples concerning their lust for leadership and authority. But I sense something else in their question here that went beyond a thirst for place and power. It was a human need to be involved in some great, final destiny! It was a need to be special - to be the right people at the right time!

In their hearts the disciples may have been saying, "Lord, where are we in Your prophetic schedule? It would be a great spiritual incentive to know we are at the end of one dispensation and that a new day is about to dawn. How excited we'd be if You'd let us know we are living and ministering in a day of destiny - that You are using us to wrap it all up!"

Saints, this same need to be people of great destiny is in all of us to some degree. But Jesus' response to this was blunt: "It is not for you to know the times." Jesus is not looking for men of destiny or kingdom builders. He wants only witnesses unto Himself! He is saying, "The issue is not the 'prophetic hour,' or some great destiny appointed to you. I must have witnesses to this present generation!"

This deeply convicts me! Like so many others today, I want to know where we are at this very minute on God's prophetic clock: Why is communism falling? When will the economy collapse? Are we about to enter the tribulation? Is God gathering the final remnant? Are we about to see judgements fall on New York City and America?

Then I hear Jesus say, "It's not for you to know. Wait on God. Become filled with the Holy Ghost.

Get God's power - then go witness!"

In the Old Testament God did nothing until He first had warned the people through His prophets. In the New Testament He says to us, "*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*" (ACTS 3:22).

That prophet is Jesus! And He is saying, "Get your eyes off the times and seasons and stop flirting with thoughts of destiny. Get the power of God to witness of Me to your present generation.

Saints, all the Old Testament prophets are dead. Paul is dead, the apostles are dead - God now has only you and me to testify of the power of Christ!

We are to live in a state of watchfulness, waiting in expectancy with our lamps trimmed and burning. We are to yearn and look for His appearing. Yes, we are to preach about His coming and warn of His judgements - but first and foremost we are to be His witnesses!

We hesitate to witness to Jews because we think it might not be the proper prophetic time. We ask ourselves, "Are the times of the Gentiles nearly fulfilled? Will the Spirit soon fall on natural Israel and take away the veil from their eyes?"

I know this has greatly hindered the Church's ministry to the Jews! We desire to know if we are being prophetically precise so we won't waste our "efforts." Yet Jesus answers, "It is not for you to know the times just witness!"

We haven't experienced a prophetic block, nor has the hardness of the hearers' hearts been the hindrance to us. It is that we have lacked the willingness to work. We have not had enough power of God in us to reach out in faith to the lost!

We want revival, blessings, outpourings, stirrings! We want to stay in church, calling down the glory of God upon us! We want to hear more preaching! That's all fine. But Jesus said, "You will

receive the Holy Ghost. You will be given power to go out and witness!"

We want to rejoice in the Lord's glorious presence - and His presence will increase as we seek Him. But we need to remember what causes Him and all of heaven to rejoice: "*Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*" (LK 15:7). "*There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*" (LK 15:10).

If we pray for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the body of Christ, it must result in a body of powerful witnesses going everywhere to lift up Jesus to the lost!

It Takes More Than a Love for Jesus and a Compassion for Lost Souls to Qualify You as His Witness!

Those who were headed for the Upper Room loved Jesus dearly. They were compassionate, self-sacrificing, soul-loving. But they were not yet qualified to be His witnesses!

They had been taught in the school of Christ. They had healed the sick and cast out demons. They had performed miracles. They had seen Jesus clothed in His eternal glory on the mount.

They had been nearby when He sweat drops of blood. They had seen Him hanging on the cross and had seen His empty tomb. They had seen Him resurrected. They had eaten with Him and talked with Him in His glorified body. They even had seen Him ascend into heaven! Yet still they were not ready to witness of Him!

Why couldn't Peter go to those milling crowds in Jerusalem and immediately testify to His resurrection? Hadn't he witnessed that event firsthand? Couldn't he preach, "Jesus is alive! He ascended into heaven! Repent!"

The difference is found in the power of the Holy Ghost!

Peter makes a powerful statement to the chief priests: "*And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath*

given to them that obey him." (ACTS 5:32).

Through the words of the Holy Ghost -- speaking through Peter -- the priests "*...were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.*" (ACTS 5:33). The Holy Ghost also had spoken through Peter on the day of Pentecost, and all who heard "*...were pricked in their heart.*" (ACTS 2:37).

Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost, preached to the religious leaders: "*Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye... When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*" (ACTS 7:51,54).

When you emerge from seeking God, full of the Holy Ghost, you can stand with boldness before fellow workers, family - anyone - and your witness will provoke one of two reactions. They will either cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" Or they will literally want to kill you! You will speak a word that cuts to the heart.

There is a Kind of Reviving and Outpouring That Lines Up With the Word of God!

If you look for it in the church building, you will be disappointed. Had you visited the Upper Room a few hours after the wind blew in and fire fell and the building was shaken - and you wanted to experience something miraculous - you would have been disappointed.

You see, the wind of the Spirit blew all the people out into the streets - into the temple court, the marketplace! You could have asked, "Where is the revival, the supernatural wind? I'd like to experience some of this shaking I've heard about. Does it feel like a mini-earthquake? Can I see some of those tongues of fire?" But you only would have been directed outside.

You would have been pointed to 120 witnesses on the streets, preaching Jesus in the power of the Holy Ghost! That's where the revival was - and always is! That's the outpouring! The wind, the fire,

the Spirit - it's now in God's witness!

If God blesses this church with another Pentecost - a time of revival and refreshing from heaven - word will spread. Curious people will come around, asking, "Well, where is it? What can we see? What can we feel? Do people fall down under God's power?"

You won't find it in the praise and worship! You won't find it in special excitements - dancing in the Spirit or being slain under the power. These are all wonderful experiences, but they can be counterfeited and duplicated in the flesh, and few today can discern the difference today.

If there is an outpouring according to God's plan, you won't find it in the church! You'll have to go to the housing projects, the schools, the subways, the job sites, the offices, the marketplaces! You'll find it in the secret closets of prayer!

In this kind of outpouring, you'll find numerous homes where saints are fasting, praying and weeping, crying out to God for their children and the unsaved! You'll see witnesses going into all places, speaking out in the power of the Holy Ghost!

You get the Holy Ghost and you go! That is the outpouring! It is not one big bonfire in the church. It is 20 or 200 or 2,000 little fires being ignited all through your city or town!

Jesus Will Become Our Prophet!

"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; HIM SHALL YE HEAR IN ALL THINGS whatsoever he shall say unto you." (ACTS 3:29).

If you're looking for a true prophet in these end times, the Holy Ghost

will lead you to no one other than Jesus! The resurrected Prophet of these last days speaks from glory to all who take the time to hear Him.

Multitudes of Christians today are running about looking for a prophet to get a few crumbs of blessing or direction. Beloved, I've found my Prophet! He reads my mind and tells me everything I need to know! He is Jesus! And the Bible says, "Hear Him in all things!"

A strong warning exists for those who don't heed this: *"And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."* (ACTS 3:23).

So many lives are being destroyed; the faith of many is being shipwrecked. Few want to hear the true Prophet - they'd rather have their ears tickled by self-proclaimed prophets who are no more than fortune-tellers.

A true prophet must line up behind Samuel and all who followed him - to bless the people by *"...turning away every one of you from his iniquities..."* (ACTS 3:24-26). True prophets don't seek validation by signs, wonders or miracles. They don't try to gain your confidence by revealing secrets. They show you the difference between the holy and the profane by turning you from your sin. They point you back to Jesus through repentance!

Judgment Warning

You may be asking, "You've spoken much of witnessing. But what about warning of coming judgements? Indeed, I've said often that God sent us to New York City to raise up a holy remnant and to warn this city of coming judgement. Shouldn't we now invade the city with books and

literature filled with warnings of economic collapse, hydrogen bombs, race riots, food shortages and sudden calamities?"

No! All of that can and probably will happen - but that is not the greatest judgement!

The real judgement results from the rejection of Christ! "Every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (ACTS 3:23). **This same Judgement falls on compromised Christians who refuse to hear Jesus' voice!**

When the Holy Spirit comes He pierces the heart, warning of sin, righteousness and judgement. And this is how He does it. The wind of His Spirit blows us onto the streets preaching the resurrected Jesus and warning the people, "If you won't hear Jesus and repent, you will be destroyed from among the people!"

How God brings about that destruction is up to Him. This is the judgement we must preach: *"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he that has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* (JN 3:18-19).

Witnesses, going forth in the power of the Holy Ghost bringing the light of Jesus, also bring judgement upon those who refuse to hear and who cling to their evil deeds!

Beloved, this is the judgment, as it has been throughout the ages: the rejection of Christ. Yet as we heed the voice of our Prophet, Jesus, our earnest prayer is that many will heed - and repent!

By David Wilkerson
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