

Our nation is in a crisis of the faith...but I believe we can raise up intercession and push back the tide of darkness and lawlessness that is pressing in on all sides. We can search out the ancient ways, bend our hearts to obey, and raise our voices to proclaim and take our place on the wall. God is looking for a man who will stand in the gap of the wall on behalf of the land.

I. HERESY: AND THE DIVINE SET UP

Matthew 24

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- A. Previously, we talked about the false messengers that will arise. There will be false christs, false teachers and false prophets. There will be a gradual, but substantial moving away from the faith. Instead of the Word, there will be preaching about positive thinking. Instead of deliverance, we will hear preaching of tolerance. These are the gradual, but eternally destructive heresies that the Apostles of the faith and Jesus warned us about.

2 Timothy 4

4:1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

- B. When we have messages with no truth...when we have services and never point people to the way of obedience, then we have entered into a famine. When we have prophesy but no weight, no condition to enter into...then this is the false message.
- C. There is a famine coming...not first of bread, but of the Word of the Lord. There is a famine coming, when sound teaching is so rare we will search but not be able to find it.

Amos 8

11 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. 12 They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.

John 14

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- D. Messengers must reprove, rebuke, and exhort in all patience and teaching (2 Timothy 4:2). Messengers must direct the hearer to Jesus...the way of the cross, the truth and the life. This prepares the heart for life. This is relevant.

2 Peter 3

16 ... There are some things in them (Paul's letters) that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

- E. We are called to bend to the will of the Lord...if something is going to bend, or twist it needs to be our own hearts. We should never allow the Word of the Lord to be twisted to appease our complacency or sin. If we remain bendable and pliable in the Lord's hand, we will be saved. If we read the Word, and our heart cry is, "God show me," then we will be found faithful in the end.
- F. This gradual moving away from the faith is the set up for the tribulation and hatred of the church: those IN the faith.

II. HATED BY ALL

Matthew 24

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

- A. After the false message infiltrates the land, after the wars and rumors of wars comes...THEN comes tribulation. Jesus was very plain in giving us the order of events. We can trust Him.

The government considers you a terrorist threat if you oppose abortion, own a gun or are a returning war veteran. That's what House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith, R-Texas, said Wednesday in response to a Department of Homeland Security report warning of the rise of right-wing extremist groups. (Fox News, blog)

- B. Maine: Historic vote. This will make anyone who preaches the standard of the Bible, liable and punishable for hate crimes!

Matthew 5

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- C. This is not about being persecuted on account of not paying your parking tickets, or being unwise in business. This is about standing with the Lord in obedience and truth. This is about being loyal to Him.

John 15

18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

- D. Have we considered what it will mean to be hated by all nations...? Meaning the standard of God will come against an assault from the entire globe. Have we considered this?

2 Timothy 3

12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

- E. ALL means all. Have we considered this? Does this line up with my thinking about blessing? Does this line up with the faith we have believed? Have we prepared our hearts for this?

III. FALLING AWAY

Matthew 24

10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another

- A. The order of events is significant. False messengers, national/global hatred and tribulation for those who remain in the faith...and then many will fall away. The pressure from the media, and the false message that many sit under week after week...is and will do something in the heart of man. It will create the set up for an all out walking away from the faith.
- B. "Jesus came to bring peace, right..." will be the argument given for renouncing the faith. It will seem unreasonable to be a Christian. It will seem intolerant. Many will say to us, "Just leave them alone...let them be in their choices."
- C. But in that hour, and it's closer than we think...God will raise up a witness that refuses to let the people alone. Although hated, they will release the standard of the Lord with great power and fire and unction. This will be our hardest hour, but our most glorious hour.

Luke 12

49 "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! 51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. 52 For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Luke 21

16 You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers [3] and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. 17 You will be hated by all for my name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.

IV. LAWLESSNESS AND THE COLD HEART

Matthew 24

12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary:

LAWLESS a.

- 1. Not subject to law; unrestrained by law; as a lawless tyrant; lawless men.**
- 2. Contrary to law; illegal; unauthorized; as a lawless claim.**
- 3. Not subject to the ordinary laws of nature; uncontrolled.**

LAWLESSNESS n.

The quality or state of being unrestrained by law; disorder.

- A. There is a twisting of scripture where we throw off restraint in the name of grace. This has nothing to do with grace. Grace is not lawlessness...In fact, obtaining grace means that we have received the Divine empowerment of God to fulfill the law. To walk in grace is to walk in obedience.

John 6

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

- B. This is grace. To do the will of the Father. There is nothing wrong with restraint. In fact, we are to be a restrained and directed people. Not living out of carnal impulse...but directed by the very word of God. Not living by feelings, but ruled by God. This is grace. This is maturity.

Proverbs 29

18 Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.

- C. In this season, let's prepare our hearts by searching out the scripture. Let's cling to the Lord. Let's raise our voices. Let's live the standard. Let's cry out for mercy. Let us become that corporate 'man' God is searching for.

Matthew 5

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.