

Godly Interruption



The Prayer of Desperation (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

This is unusual, I don't know that God has ever done this exactly before. He gave me a title and then I had to try to find out what He wanted me to say. The title is "The Prayer of Desperation." I want to tell you how it came about.

A little while back in the United States I was teaching a series of six messages on "Israel: Past, Present and Future." The last two messages were called "Glimpses of the Future," they were an attempt to present out of Scripture what still lies ahead for Israel as they have returned to their own land. I had come to Zechariah chapter 14:1–3, which is the climax, it's the return of Messiah in glory, that's the climax of Israel's history. I actually have a list of sixteen prophecies concerning Israel, of which thirteen have already been fulfilled. There remain only three to be fulfilled, and the last one is the return of Messiah. I always tell people if thirteen out of sixteen have been fulfilled, that's more than eighty percent. It is not unreasonable to expect the remaining twenty percent to be fulfilled. We're not fanatics, we're reasonable people. I would say it is unreasonable to refuse to accept that the probability that the remaining three prophecies will be fulfilled.

Now I'm going to read to you from Zechariah chapter 14:1–3. These words are addressed to Jerusalem, you need to understand that.

> "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming and your spoil [or your plunder] will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses plundered, and the women raped. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..."

When Jesus went up to heaven, where did He go from? The Mount of Olives. Two angels told the disciples, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven." He went from the Mount of Olives, He went in the clouds; He's coming back in the clouds and His feet are going to stand on the

Mount of Olives.

And, there's going to be a great earthquake. The mountain is going to be divided into two, half going north and half going south. I spent my last year of military service in a British hospital on the Mount of Olives at a point which I believe is the exact point where the mountain will be divided, because it's an earthquake area. There was an earthquake there in 1923 which so severely damaged one of the towers of the building that nobody is allowed up it. So, for me this is extremely vivid, I can almost see it in my mind's eye as I talk about it.

Sometimes the Lord speaks to me while I'm speaking to people. Here I was, preaching this message, but something was going on in my mind and it was this, in a sense. If the Lord intends to intervene on behalf of the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem, why will He let half the city go into captivity? The houses will be plundered and the women raped. Why wouldn't He do it before that happened? This was going on in my mind while I was preaching it. I thought I got the answer because the Lord will not intervene until His people have reached a moment of total desperation, when they come to the point where they know there is absolutely no other hope and no other source of help but God and the Messiah. Then He will intervene. I saw that as a principle that many times God will not intervene until we come to the point of desperation.

And then I said something that surprised me. I said that's what salvation is. Salvation is taking advantage of the only hope that you have of escaping from hell. There is no other way of escape but to turn to Jesus who died on your behalf. If you don't take that, you're lost.

It wasn't by any means an evangelistic service but I said, "I believe there's somebody here who needs to make that decision tonight." And immediately young woman came forward, stood right in front of me and gave her heart to the Lord at that point. And, two other men followed later.

Dear friends, I want to say to you tonight, that's what salvation is. It's the only way of escape from a lost eternity, from something so terrible that the human mind cannot even comprehend it. There is no other way. You don't know, none of you know, none of us knows how much longer we may have. God could withdraw the breath from your body tonight, you might never awake to see the new day. Friends, it is urgent, it is desperate to get saved, to escape hell. Not many people talk about hell today but hell is very, very real. It's very close. You just close your eyes in death and you find yourself in hell.

So the principle that I want to bring out to you tonight is there are certain things that God will only do when we come to the moment of desperation. There came to my mind in that connection Isaiah chapter 30, reading verses 18 and 19.

> "Therefore the Lord will wait that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted that He may have mercy on you."

The Lord is waiting till He can have mercy on you, till we meet the conditions.

> "For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for Him! For the people [Israel] shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem, you shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry! When He hears it, He will answer."

What is He waiting for? The sound of our cry. I think you'll find the NIV says "your cry for help." The Hebrew word sa-akar means a desperate call for help. It's the shout of a man who's drowning and going down for the third time, and he cries out, "Help!" God is waiting for His people to come to that point.

Then I was led to Deuteronomy chapter 32. Who was it that was saying to us tonight that Deuteronomy is such a wonderful book? Was it you? Well, it is, you're right. Deuteronomy 32. This is amazing because before Israel ever entered the land of Canaan Moses told them all that would happen to them, and he told them that they would be unfaithful to God, turn to idolatry and ultimately be driven out of the land and spend many, many years in exile. God told them all that before they ever went in. Here is some of what God says concerning the final crisis in the history of Israel. Now I want to say I don't believe the church is Israel. The church is the church and Israel is Israel. If you ever get confused, you'll be confused for a long while. But, God's dealings with Israel as a nation are a pattern of the way He deals with other nations and with individuals. So, there are countless lessons to learn from God's dealings with Israel. Here is what Moses told Israel as they were gathered on the east side of the Jordan, just before they went over. Deuteronomy 32:23–27. God has already told them they're going to go into idolatry and be totally unfaithful. Then He says, and these are terrible words:

> "I will heap disasters upon them, I will spend my arrows upon them. They shall be wasted with hunger, devoured by pestilence, and bitter destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, with the poison of

> serpents of the dust. The sword shall destroy outside; there shall be terror within. For the young man and virgin, will perish, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs. I have said I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease from among men, [now listen] had I not feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, 'Our hand is high and it is not the Lord who has done all this.'"

God says "For the honor of my name I'm going to intervene, because otherwise your enemies will think that they are the ones who brought all this disaster upon you."

And then further in verses 36–38, it's all part of the same vision:

> "For the Lord will judge His people and have compassion on His servants..."

I'd like to say something. In dealing with people I've discovered there's a difference between compassion and sympathy. A lot of people come for counseling because they want sympathy. God does not offer you sympathy. Sympathy says, "Poor you. Nobody's treating you right. I don't think God is even treating you right." Compassion says, "I'm very sorry for you but you need to change." That's the difference. If you're not prepared to change, don't come for counseling.

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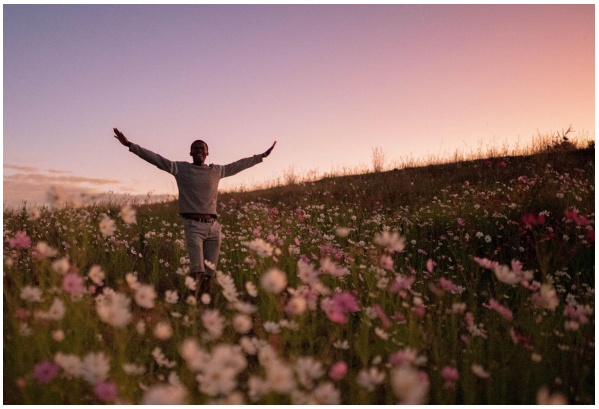
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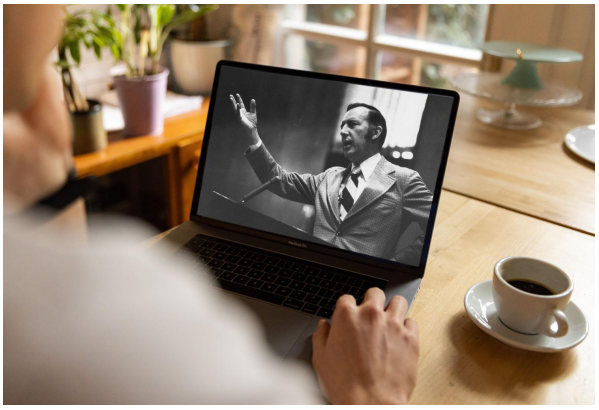
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