

Prosperity



Into the Harvest (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

There's two verses in Jeremiah 5 which have always impressed me. They're in the middle of one of the many passages in which Jeremiah was condemning the people of his day for their hardheartedness and unbelief. It's Jeremiah 5:23–24, but it follows with a marvelous revelation.

> "This people [that's the people of Judah in the day of Jeremiah]..."

And I think I need to pause and say this. If you study the life and the ministry of Jeremiah, he ministered in a time when his nation was in a period of spiritual decline leading to ultimate total disaster. I wonder how many Americans could even conceive that would be possible, perhaps true of America. Could it enter your head to conceive for a moment that this nation could be in a period of spiritual decline which will lead to ultimate, total disaster? See, there were many false prophets in the time of Jeremiah who said, "Everything will be all right. We've got the temple." They said the temple, the temple, the temple. They kept repeating that phrase, the temple. "As long as we've got the temple everything's all right." I say there are a lot of professing believers who say born again, born again, born again. "Everything's all right, I'm born again." It isn't true. There was only one prophet as far as I could understand in the time of Jeremiah in this time of spiritual decline who told the truth. And most of the people wouldn't listen because the false prophets who were numerous were telling them the opposite. I have to say I could believe that's true in this nation at this time. The people who are really telling it like it is are relatively few. The people who are saying everything's all right, God will bless you, He'll heal you, He'll take care of you, He'll prosper you—

Brothers and sisters, I know all the scriptures about prosperity as well as anybody and I've preached them. But let me tell you that prosperity is not what Americans understand. It's not a big car and a refrigerator and a swimming pool. I'll give you two examples. God told Joshua that, "If you do what I tell you, then you will have good success and you will make your way prosperous." How did Joshua enter the land of promise? Not in a Cadillac. Where did he live? Not in first class hotels. He was in the condition of warfare, the corresponding vehicle today would be a tank. He spent his nights in the open fields, he was continually engaged in forced marches. It was a time of conflict. Prosperity is not having everything the way you want it. Prosperity is

accomplishing the will of God successfully.

I think the second example is even more remarkable. In Romans 1 Paul prayed that he might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to Rome. Exactly the same Greek word is used in 2 John 2 where it says:

> "Beloved, I pray above all things that thou would prosper and be in health."

It's the same word. Did Paul have a prosperous journey to Rome? He didn't travel as a first class passenger. He was a prisoner in chains. He was in a storm unparalleled that for fourteen days and nights they never saw the sun. After that he was shipwrecked on an island. And finally as he was gathering wood to feed the fire, a viper bit him. Would you call that a prosperous journey? It was. Why? Because the will of God was accomplished. We have to adjust our thinking as to what prosperity is. It's not having an easy life with plenty of money and no problems. It's successfully accomplishing the purposes of God in the face of intense opposition.

Now, let's go back to Jeremiah 5. I tell you, I've been so occupied with Jeremiah lately. It's as though God has been saying to me, "This is the book that you need to know to understand what's happening in the church today." Jeremiah 5:23:

> "This people has a defiant and rebellious heart. They have revolted and departed. They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the Lord our God.'"

One thing that is conspicuous by its absence in the contemporary church is the fear of the Lord. People could not say the things and do the things that we see if they really were motivated by fear of the Lord. Sometime it would pay many of you to study the fear of the Lord, it's one of the main themes of scripture. As far as I've been able to discover, the greatest blessings that God promises of all His blessings are promised to the fear of the Lord.

> "The fear of the Lord leads to life and he who has it will abide in satisfaction. He will not be visited with evil."

Have you ever considered that? If you are not in satisfaction, somehow or other you're lacking the fear of the Lord.

> "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life."

It would be foolish to turn that down. Many of you need to pray, "Lord, help me to cultivate the fear of the Lord."

Anyhow, the problem with Judah in the time of Jeremiah was they didn't understand, they didn't acknowledge the Lord as the giver of the rain.

> "They do not say in their hearts, 'Let us now fear the Lord our God who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.'"

What was the rain given for, in one word? The harvest. I love that phrase "He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Have you ever walked into a restaurant and seen a table that you think you'd like to sit at because it's right there in the window and has a special view? And then as you approach the table there's just a little sign on it that says one word which is reserved. You can't sit there. God has reserved the weeks of the harvest. Not months but weeks. And He says to Satan, "You can't have it. I won't let you loose until the harvest has been gathered in."

But you understand what I'm saying? The baptism in the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they're all given for the sake of the harvest to equip us to go out into the harvest. I've said to Jewish believers and friends of mine in Israel, "We non Jews need to apologize to you Jews for ever asking you to believe a gospel that was not supernaturally attested because it's contrary to everything your own scriptures teach." God has provided the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be a supernatural attestation of the gospel. That's why they're given. They're not given for us to enjoy ourselves and meet around and be super-spiritual and prophesy over one another and then say, "Good bye, brother. God bless you, see you next Sunday." That's not the purpose. The purpose is for the harvest. If you don't understand that you are missing God's plan in your life.

I want to say there will be two harvests. Another word that is very seldom used today in the church as I know it—and I mean, I don't know the whole church but I've seen a good many aspects of it—is the word judgment. Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes He will convict of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. But that last word has got left out. If we don't speak about judgment, how can the Holy Spirit convict of judgment? We're missing a major part of the message. Jesus is not only the Savior—thank God He is—He's the Judge. You realize that? The same person who is the Savior is also the Judge. As I understand it, reading the first chapter of the book of Revelation, John there encountered Jesus as the Judge. And the same apostle who had rested his head on

the bosom of Jesus at the Last Supper and talked with Him in real intimacy fell at His feet like one dead when He encountered the Judge. We need to have a vision of Jesus as Judge.

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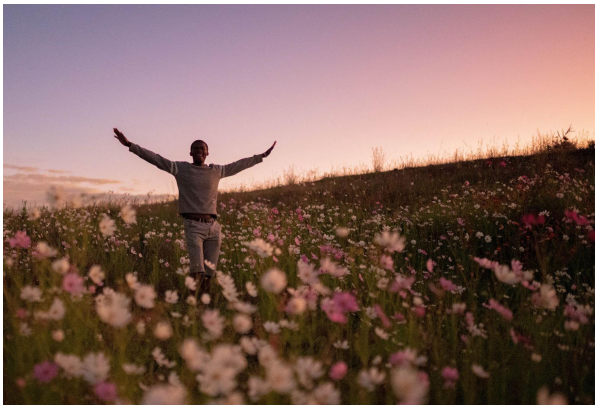
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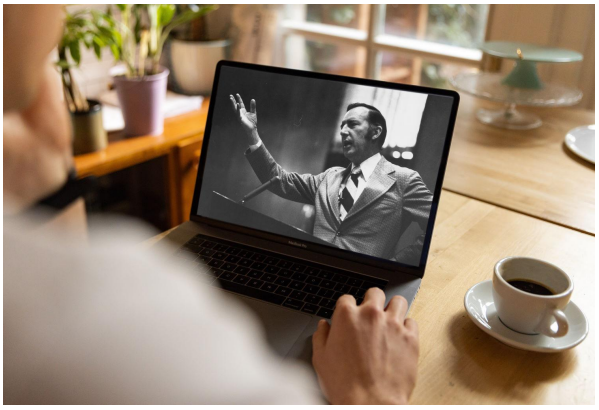
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