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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Climax In Four Phases



Part 1/3

Toward the Climax
By Derek Prince

If you have a Bible with you and you want to find the text that I'm going to begin with, it will be in Acts, chapter 3, and I'm going to read verses 19 through 21. I felt tonight that I would like to share with you some thoughts the Lord has been giving me about His program for the close of the age, which I believe is close at hand, and about the purposes which He is seeking to accomplish, and especially how they relate to us.

I imagine that the majority of us here are in some way or other, maybe not totally, but in some measure, associated with what is called today the charismatic renewal. I believe that this is a move of God, and I believe that God has definite and specific purposes that He wishes to accomplish through it. And I would like to speak in some measure about that tonight.

Let's turn to the Scripture in Acts 3, verses 19 through 21, and want to read them to you. These words were spoken by the apostle Peter and his heroes were all Jews. The words were spoken in the city of Jerusalem but they have, I believe, a very real and definite application to us in the twentieth century here in the United States. Remember that at that time, the only covenant people that God had in the earth were Israel. The majority of them were backslidden, had turned away from God, and had just been guilty of rejecting the Messiah, whom their prophets had promised and whom God had sent. But nevertheless, they were God's covenant people, related to Him in a special way that separated them from all other peoples of the earth. Today, God has also another covenant people— the church of Jesus Christ. But I believe that much of what applied to Israel in those days applies to the church in these days. And so when I read these words, I do not want you to think of them as applying only to Israel, but I want you to apply them to us at the close of this age. Acts 3, 19 through

> "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you: Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath

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> spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

We see that there is a period which has been spoken of by all God's prophets. To me, this makes this period of extreme importance. That every prophet God ever had in the earth, from the beginning of creation or the beginning of the human race, let me say that, until this time that Peter was speaking—all the prophets had spoken about a certain period that was to come in the history of the human race. To me, this makes this period of extreme interest and importance.

Now, in these words, the apostle Peter gives us certain successive phases that have to follow in God's divine program. By happy coincidence in the English language, each one of these four key words begins with the letters, 'r-e.' And we'll just go through them and see if you can pick them out as we go through.

The first thing that God demanded of His people was that they **repent**. And then He said, 'If you will repent and return to God, there shall come seasons of **refreshing**.' And then He said, 'Out of the seasons of refreshing [and I'm using slightly different words than the King James because I think they're more accurate] . . . . Out of the seasons of refreshing [in verse 21] there will come [or develop] times of **restitution** of all things.' Now, where the King James says, 'restitution,' I prefer the word **restoration**.

Let me say immediately, just to clear up any misunderstanding, there is a doctrine, some of you may not have heard of it, it's entitled 'ultimate reconciliation,' which suggests that ultimately, everything and everybody will be reconciled to God, including the devil and the fallen angels and demons and the unrepentant dead, and everybody. And in case there should be any misunderstanding, I want to make it clear that I do not believe that—I do not believe it is scriptural; I do not believe that the Bible teaches it; and I want to disassociate myself from it. However, if I use this word or phrase, 'restitution of all things,' without saying that, somebody could easily walk away from this meeting and say, 'You know what Brother Prince was preaching, he was preaching reconciliation of all things.' So please understand that is not what I am preaching.

All right. The third phase, then, is the times of **restoration**. I prefer the word, 'restoration.' It has a clearer meaning for people in the United States today. In Matthew 17, verse 11, the same word is used as a verb, where Jesus says, 'Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things.' It's the same word. One is a verb, the other is a noun.

Then, in this period of restoration, there is one tremendous event. The greatest event in all human history that is scheduled to take place, and that is the return of Jesus. Shall we just put those four key words up on the chalkboard?

> "Number one is Repent.
> Number two is Refreshing, that's right.
> Number three is Restoration.
> And number four is Return."

All right. Now this is clearly stated in the words of Peter: repent, refreshing, restoration, return. I think there can be no question whatever that that is what Peter clearly states.

Now, let me say that there's a difference between knowing the day and hour when Jesus will return, and being aware of the times and the seasons. Jesus said, 'Of the day and the hour knoweth no man, no, not even the son of God, not the angels, but only one person in the universe knows the day and hour of Jesus' return.' Who is that? God the Father. That's right. On the other hand, Paul said to the Thessalonians, 'Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye do not need to be instructed, because you are not the children of darkness, but you are the children of the light' [1 Thessalonians 5:1–5]. The implication is that if we are the children of the light, we shall be aware of the times and the seasons in which we are living. And I believe that to be so. So I am not setting a day or an hour for the return of Jesus Christ, but I am saying that there is a time and a season when it must take place. It cannot take place before, and it cannot take place after, the appointed time and season.

And this is clearly stated in Acts 3:21 to be the times, or the period, of restoration of all things. For it says in that verse about Jesus Christ, if you will look at the beginning of verse 21, 'Whom [that is, Jesus] the heaven must receive [or I prefer to say, 'retain'] until the times of restoration of all things.' Jesus must remain in heaven until this period of restoration of all things. In this period of restoration of all things, then the way is open for Jesus to return. So we have this clear outline of the successive phases related to God's people that are to mark the close of the age: repentance, refreshing, restoration and the return of Christ. I want to go into these and try to see how they affect us, and people such as us all over the world today.

Let's consider, first of all, the meaning of the word *repent*. I believe there are few words used in the gospels which are so little understood by most Christians as the word *repent*. This is a key word. If you do not understand it, many of God's blessings are not for you, because the essential step

into the blessings of God; the first step, is the step of repentance. Many, many people today are groping for blessings, but missing them because they have not taken this vital step of repentance.

There is much misunderstanding in the church at large about what repentance is. At the one end of the scale, amongst maybe the fundamentalists and the Pentecostals, repentance is associated with some kind of emotion. The other end of the scale, for instance in the Roman Catholic Church, in some of their translations, the Douay Version, this word is translated, 'to do penance.' Each is equally misleading. Repentance is not some ordinance or ritual of the church. On the other hand, repentance is not an emotion. Here is where the majority of Charismatics are still misled. You may feel strong emotion and not repent. Likewise, you may repent and feel really no emotion. Repentance and emotion are not the same thing.

There are two basic words that are translated by the word *repent* in the Bible. A Hebrew word in the Old Testament and a Greek word in the New. Each has a clear, definite meaning. The Hebrew word is 'to turn, to turn around, or to return.' The Greek word, in case anybody here is interested in Greek, is *metanoeho*, means specifically, 'to change your mind.' In translating secular Greek literature, nine times out of ten, this word would be translated, 'to change your mind.' So repentance is turning around and changing your mind. Or, let's put it the other way: it's changing your mind and turning round. As a matter of fact, Peter uses both phrases, really, because he says, 'Repent, and be converted.' 'To be converted' is simply to turn around 180 degrees.

So, repentance is not an ordinance, it's not a ritual, it's not an emotion. It's a decision of the will, registered in the mind. Repentance is this: you're going the wrong way—you're going your own way, you're pleasing yourself, you're setting your own standards, you're making your own rules— and you are brought up sharp by Almighty God, the Holy Spirit. You stop immediately, turn around, face Almighty God, and submit yourself without reservation to what God then requires you to do. That is repentance.

Let me say it again. You're going the wrong way, like the whole of the human race, for Isaiah 53:6 says, *'All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way.'* That's the biggest problem with the human race, is going your own way. When you are going your own way, there is only one way that you can get back to God and that is by repentance. You're going the wrong way, you stop, you turn around 180 degrees, you face Almighty God, and you submit yourself without reservation to what God requires you to do. And if you have not done that, you have not repented. Repentance solves about 50 percent of all spiritual problems that people have. A person who has repented does not argue with Almighty God. If you are still prone to argue with God, then you have not repented, and that's your problem.

I would like to study repentance briefly with you, and how it is used throughout the New Testament. It is one of the essential requirements of God that never varies. If you turn to Mark's gospel, if you want to turn in the Bible, you may do so, the first chapter of Mark's gospel, verses 1 through 4, you will find that John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way before the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. It was essential that John should come first. I'm going to deal with this in greater length a little further on. But it is so important to realize that Jesus could not come till John the Baptist had prepared the way.

John the Baptist had to prepare the way, and it says in Mark 1, [verse 3], he was the 'voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight his paths.' And his message that he preached to prepare the way of the Lord and prepare the hearts of God's people for the coming of Messiah could be summed up in one word, which is repentance. He did preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The outward evidence that the people who listen to John had repented and intended to turn around, change their way of living, submit to God, was that they passed through the waters of baptism. That was the meaning of John's baptism. It was not Christian baptism, which has a completely different significance, which is identification with Jesus in His burial and resurrection, which was impossible in John's time. The significance of John's baptism was it was outward evidence of repentance, and if people had not repented, as the Pharisees, John refused to baptize them. He said, 'Why are you coming to me to be baptized? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance and then I will baptize you' [Matthew 3:8]. The basic requirement of John's baptism was repentance.

Then we read that Jesus came, was baptized of John, and after John was put into prison, Jesus began His public preaching ministry. And in Mark, chapter 1, verse 15, you'll find the first requirement that Jesus ever made of those who listened to Him. He said, 'The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' What did people have to do? 'Repent and believe the gospel.' You see, there's a great mistake in much modern preaching, which says 'only believe.'

Now I know Jesus said, 'only believe,' when He was on the way to raise the daughter of Jairus from the deathbed. But to take that out of its context and say that that is all that

God requires of the sinner is to misrepresent God. Because, before believing, God demands repentance. The order is, repent and believe. Many, many people today think they're having a struggle for faith, but their real struggle is for repentance. Without true repentance, there really never can be true faith. So, Jesus said, 'Repent and believe the gospel.'

In Luke, chapter 13, Jesus was questioned about some Galileans who had been offering sacrifices. Pilate had apparently sent his executioners, and these Galileans had been executed in the midst of offering their sacrifices to God, so that their own blood had been mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. And people came to Jesus apparently, according to the Scripture, and said, 'What about these Galileans? Were they worse than others, that this happened to them while they were sacrificing?' And Jesus said, 'I tell you, no, but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.'

And then He said, 'What about those 18 upon whom the tower in Siloam fell? Were they worse than all the others?' 'No,' He said, 'but I tell you, except you repent, you shall likewise perish.' The only alternative to perishing is repenting. That's the alternative set before every human soul. Repent or perish. You must do one or the other.

How significant that all their sacrifices that these Galileans had been offering when they were killed apparently did not save their souls, for Jesus said, 'They perished.' And that word normally indicates a lost soul. So you may be in the midst of any religious ordinance, you may be in the midst of going to church, you may be in the midst of praying, and if God requires your soul, you will perish unless you have repented. That's the alternative.

After Jesus had died and risen from the dead, He appeared again to His disciples. He commissioned them to go into all the world and preach the good news of the gospel. In Luke, chapter 24, verse 47, Jesus said, 'It was necessary that Christ [the Messiah] should die and be the first that should rise from the dead.' And then He said that, 'in his name, repentance and remission of sins should be preached amongst all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'

So the first offer in the gospel, in the name of Jesus, is not forgiveness, it's repentance. Repentance and forgiveness of sins. Never leave out the repentance, because there is no forgiveness of sins without repentance.

In Acts, chapter 2, verse 38, we find the words of Peter to the men and women to whom he had preached on the Day of Pentecost. And as a result of the descent of the Holy Spirit and the message that Peter preached, these people had come under conviction. They realized they were not right with God. They'd been going their own way. And God was going to require of them an account of their lives and what they had done, and especially their treatment of the Messiah. So, they said, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' And in Acts 2:38, Peter gave them God's answer. It's very simple, very clear. 'Repent . . . be baptized every one of you . . . receive the Holy Spirit.' This is God's answer to the question, 'What am I to do to be reconciled with God?'

Man has, sadly, split up the answer and dismembered it and given some portions to some people and other portions to other people. God's answer is clear, it's three things: number one: repent; number two, be baptized; number three, receive the Holy Spirit. God's program has not changed. If we could hear from heaven every time a sinner turned to God, the answer would be precisely what it was on the Day of Pentecost: repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit. We cannot find in the New Testament—at least I cannot find—one person from Pentecost onwards, to claim forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ and who was not thereupon immediately baptized in water. There is no such case in the New Testament. Anybody that claims forgiveness without being baptized in water is trespassing upon the grace of Almighty God. The answer of God is, repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit to enable you to lead an effective Christian life here on earth.

The first thing, as always, is repent. In Acts 17, verse 30, the apostle Paul is speaking to the men of Athens and basically, they were Gentiles. There were not many Jews amongst them, and he spoke about the time that had passed in which they had worshipped idols and images and so on. He said, 'The times of this ignorance God hath winked at [closed His eyes to] but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' There are no omissions. 'All men everywhere' doesn't leave out any one. The first requirement of Almighty God of all men in all places at all times is to repent.

In Acts, chapter 20, verses 20 and 21, you find the testimony of the apostle Paul of the message that he preached in the city of Ephesus. He spent about three years in the city of Ephesus and later on, he had a meeting with the elders of the church in Ephesus and he reminded them of his ministry in Ephesus and what he had preached. And he says he had 'kept back nothing that was profitable to them, but had shown them publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jew and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Before faith in Christ comes repentance toward God. There are no exceptions to God's program.

In Hebrews, chapter 6, verses 1 and 2, you find laid out the six foundation doctrines of the Christian faith. Not the foundation which is the person, the Lord Jesus Christ, but the six foundation doctrines. The writer says, 'Not laying again the foundation,' and he states six doctrines which are the basis of my *Foundation Series* of books. And when it comes to the foundation, the six doctrines are: number one, repentance from dead works; number two, faith toward God; number three, the doctrine of baptisms; number four, laying on of hands; number five, resurrection of the dead; number six, eternal judgment. These are the six basic truths on which the Christian gospel is founded. The first one is *repentance from dead works*. 'Dead works' are all works that are not done in faith and obedience to God through Jesus Christ. It may be religious works, or it may be secular works, but any work that is not done specifically to please God in faith through Jesus Christ is a dead work. And the Scripture says the first thing we have to do in laying this doctrinal foundation is to lay the foundation of repentance from dead works. You see, that's why many, many Christians have such a wobbly and unconvincing testimony, because their foundation has never been solidly laid.

My wife and I and some of the children lived once in a house in Jerusalem in the years 1946 through '48 that had been built by an Assyrian who lived in Bethlehem. And those were the days when the British government ruled in Palestine. This Assyrian took the plans for his house to the government and submitted plans for a two-story building, got it approved, and then added an extra half-story on top, so he had two and a half stories. Now the foundation was adequate for two stories, but inadequate for two-and-a-half stories. So while we were living in the building, it began to tilt ever so slightly. The foundation was not sufficient to bear the building. That's why so many Christians' lives show a little tilt—because the foundation is not adequate for the building that they want to construct. And usually the stone that's been omitted in the foundation is number one, it's repentance.

See, I am convinced, and I listen to people on the phone, in person everywhere, pouring out their problems to me, until sometimes I wonder whether they don't think I have some problems, too. And I am persuaded that 50 percent of those problems would not exist at all if those people had truly repented. Fifty percent of all problems would be eliminated by that one factor of true repentance. Let me say this again. When you have repented, you don't argue with God. You just want to know what God requires you to do. That's all. There's no doubt or hesitation in your mind that you will do it. If you find yourself arguing with God, trying to get God to change His mind or find Him in another mood, or wishing that certain verses weren't in the Bible, the root of your problem is clear. You haven't repented. You're struggling to believe. Devote all that energy to repenting. You'll be amazed how easy faith will become. The order is, repent, and then believe.

Now, at the close of this age, I'm convinced that we are going to have to lay renewed emphasis on the truth of repentance. Let me also point out to you that in the closing book of the Bible, which is the book of Revelation, we have in chapters 2 and 3 messages sent from the Lord Himself to seven Christian churches in the province of Asia. With two of those churches, Jesus had no fault to find— the church of Smyrna and the church of Philadelphia. With all the other five churches, Jesus had faults to find. He said, 'I have somewhat against thee,' and He proceeded to tell them. He also said in every case, 'I know thy works.' With every church that He had a fault to find, His first requirement was 'repent.' Some people believe that Christians don't need to repent. The truth of the matter is, Christians are the ones who need to repent first. God cannot deal with the world if He cannot deal with the church. See, God's order always is, first the church and then the world.

Peter says, 'The time has come that judgment must begin [where?] . . . the house of God.' And if it first begin in us. [muddled 27:04] I believe Evan Roberts, in the great Welsh revival, used to say this: 'Bend the church and bow the world.' You have no problem in bowing the world when you can bend the church. The problem is with the church. See, Jesus cannot bypass the church because it's His body. If the Holy Spirit cannot have its way in the church, He cannot have His way through the church. We are the barrier, if there is a barrier at any time.

So the first requirement of God is always from His people, not from those that are outside a covenant relationship. And whenever God's people have got away from God, walked in their own ways and their own will in disobedience, the first demand of Almighty God never varies. It is repent. And it still is today.

Now, let me come back to the parallel between the first coming of Jesus and the second, because I find this extremely illuminating. I believe, and I'm sure many of you would agree with me, that the time for the first coming of Jesus, when He came as Jesus of Nazareth to suffer and to die for the sins of the world was specifically and exactly fixed in the program of God. When Jesus said, 'The time is fulfilled,' He meant exactly that. The time has come.

I believe, personally, that in the ninth chapter of Daniel, we have a very exact time schedule leading up to the coming

and rejection of Messiah. Now this is a complicated calculation; I don't want to go into it tonight, but I believe that the time for the coming of the Lord the first time was specifically fixed. One of the great scholars who has calculated from the ninth chapter of Daniel, calculated it down to the exact day, and I'm inclined to believe that there is much to be said for his calculations.

Now the time for the first coming of Jesus was fixed, and yet, He could not come till John the Baptist had come first and prepared the hearts of the people of God. He could not come while the hearts of God's people were unprepared. So the hearts of God's people had to be prepared first by the message of repentance; then Jesus could come. Yet, the time of the coming of Jesus was fixed and could not be changed. How do you account for that? I have no problem, you see. I believe the predestination of God is related to the foreknowledge of God. I believe God could set a time because He knew when He could find a John the Baptist and He knew when John the Baptist could touch the hearts of God's people so that they would meet the requirements that would make them ready for the coming of Jesus. God set a date, but He also set requirements. The date was His predestination; the fact that Israel would meet His requirements was His foreknowledge. I have no intellectual problem about that, personally myself.

Now, I believe exactly the same is true of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe the day and the hour are fixed and known to God the Father. And yet, as I understand Scripture, it is not possible for Jesus to come until the way has been prepared for His second coming, precisely as it was for His first. And for the second coming, as for the first, the major preparation is in the hearts of His people through the message of repentance. Peter said, 'Repent. When you do, there will come times of refreshing.' Then, from the times of refreshing, we will be ushered into the period of restoration. And in the period of restoration, there will take place the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven must retain Jesus until that time of restoration. The time of restoration cannot come till God's people have repented and been refreshed.

So, exactly as it was in the first coming, so it is in the second. The time is fixed, but there are conditions that God's people must meet. How can we be sure that God's people will meet them? Because God's foreknowledge knows when God's people will meet the conditions. In fact, as I say, I believe every prophet that has prophesied from the beginning of the human race to the time of the apostle Peter spoke specifically of this time because this is the time that God knew that the people would be ready to meet His conditions. This is why, as I understand it, this is THE generation above all other generations that have ever lived in the human race. This is THE generation which cannot pass till all these things be fulfilled.

You see, it's stated clearly. In Matthew 24, Luke 21, there is a generation, foreknown of God, when that generation is ushered in, then the close of the age must come before that generation has passed away. This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled. Now, I believe this applies specifically to the time in which we are living. And I believe that the Scripture also declares that there must be this message of preparation.

Now, when John the Baptist came, Jesus said, 'If ye can receive it, this is Elijah.' But He also said, after John the Baptist had been executed and his ministry was finished, 'Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things.' Again, I have no personal problem. I believe there must be a double coming of Elijah—one for each coming of the Lord. In the Spirit, John the Baptist *was* Elijah. His father prophesied of him that he would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet. But if you turn back in the Old Testament to the last two verses of the Old Testament, that's Malachi, chapter 4, verses 5 and 6, you'll find that there's still something more to be fulfilled. You see, in Malachi 3:1, you have the promise of John the Baptist. 'Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me, saith the Lord.' That messenger was John the Baptist. But now, in chapter 4 of Malachi, we have the warning of the imminence of the great day of the Lord, verse 1:

> "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

This is the coming of the great day of God's judgment on the wicked. This is yet future, and at the end of that same fourth chapter of Malachi, verses 5 and 6, we have in this connection and this context, again the promise of the coming of Elijah.

> "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD [this is the day of judgment, the great and dreadful day, not the day of

> grace, but the day of judgment]: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Have you ever considered that the last word of the Old Testament is a very, very sinister word—curse? And if there'd never been a New Testament, had never been a Savior, had never been a gospel, God's last word to the human race would've been a curse. But thank God for the New Testament. The Savior, who was made a curse, that we might receive the blessing.

Now, notice that before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord, Elijah must come, and oh, how this blesses me when I see how God foreknows the situation. There's one specific thing above all others in His call to repentance that He must do: He must turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to their fathers. Now if ever there was a message that was needed in modern America, that is the message. See, it is the disintegration of home life and family life that is the greatest single threat to the well-being of this nation. And I suppose the most sinister feature of the present age in which we live is the breakdown of family relationships, particularly between fathers and children.

I have said—, I was preaching in a place in Ohio recently, and I said three times in five days: The average modern American male is a renegade, and I'll justify that statement specifically. He has reneged from his three primary responsibilities—as husband, father and spiritual leader. And here is the basic problem of America. It's renegade males. Males who have reneged. You didn't realize, maybe, that the word, *renege* is directly connected with the word *renegade*, see? People who renege are renegades.

The males of America—I would say 80 percent of them, myself—and that, I think, is a conservative estimate—have reneged from their three great responsibilities in life: to be a husband, a father and a spiritual leader. So we have in America essentially a matriarchal system, where women control 80 percent of the finance and teenagers control 15 percent, and that tells you how much is left for the male. [laughter] And where church leaders sit at the feet of women, to be counseled in counseling. Have you ever heard such a thing? And where women, really, make most of the decisions, even in the church.

Now, this is not an attack on women, because as Bob Mumford says, 'leadership goes by default.' If the man won't do it, the woman has to do it. However, ladies, I would quote to you in this connection, a verse that I've already read: Acts 17, verse 31, 'The times of this ignorance, God has closed his eyes to, **but** now commandeth all men every where to repent.' We are going through a social and a spiritual revolution, and you know what happens in a revolution? There's a transfer of power, and power is being transferred out of the hands of the female back into the hands of the male.

See, so many American males run away from their family responsibilities and become the president of a bank, or achieve some tremendous golf handicap, or become the president of the yachting club, or build a country club, or do something like that. That is defeat. It is not success. It is failure. Believe me, I'm convinced, the hardest job in life is to be a father. Anybody that can do that is a success. And any man that has that responsibility and cannot do it is a failure, no matter what else he does. He's the president of three banks, it doesn't impress me. Men tend to run to business to escape their family problems. You know where ladies run—the church. Now, many, many ladies are serving the church, not because they love the church, but because it's a get-out from home problems that they're not prepared to face. But there's a time coming when God demands that this situation be changed. I mean, you know when that time is? It's right now.

What will Elijah do? He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and that's where it begins, with the fathers. Most American fathers need to get down on their faces before Almighty God and repent. That's where the word applies. Because you have been living by your own standards to please yourself, and in the sight of God you are a failure. God showed me very clearly. He said, 'You can travel with that black briefcase of yours from city to city and preach sermons and have people gather around the altar at the end, but,' He said, 'if you cannot manage your home and if your family is not in order, in My sight, you're a failure.' And as far as I am concerned, I don't want to be a failure. I don't know how about.....how to be a success. [bad garble 40:26:4] And I don't want to cover up basic failure by superficial success. The greatest requirement of the moment is the one stated in Malachi 4:6, 'He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.' Then the children to their fathers.

Notice, it doesn't say mothers. It's the father that holds the key. See, the father is two things in every family. He's the priest, and he's the prophet. The priest—representing his family to God; the prophet—representing God to his family. And he cannot abdicate from either of those responsibilities. Father, when your children go wrong, don't

blame the pastor, the Sunday school teacher, or the youth leader, because you cannot transfer your responsibilities in those directions. Because the father has these two responsibilities. God has given him certain rights which, again, are not transferrable. The father has the right to pray the prayer of the priest for his family and be heard. The father has the right to declare the law of God to his family, and God will uphold his authority. But he will not necessarily uphold the authority of the mother, no matter how she may struggle to take the father's place.

I was speaking to a woman the other day, whose children were backsliders or unsaved, which is so common, and I was trying to give her a message of encouragement, and I gave her Acts 16:31. How many of you know what that says? 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.' When I said this to the woman, the Holy Spirit said very gently to me, 'You're misusing that verse. It wasn't spoken to a woman, it was spoken to a man who is the head of the house. And when the man believed, God was obligated to bring his house in, as He always has been in every age and every dispensation.' God said to Noah, just before the flood, 'Thee have I seen righteous, come thou and all thy house into the ark.' When the head comes, the body must follow, but it's contrary to divine order for one of the members to go first and the head to be dragged in. I tell the ladies, they say, 'Brother Prince, what shall we do?'

'Well,' I say, 'now listen, don't get in front of your husband and pull him, get behind and push him.' That's a start, see? Ladies, I agree, it's a problem. And I don't have all the answers, please, so don't come up to me at the end and ask in detail how you ought to handle that renegade husband, because that's your problem, and you better take it to God. But I said the other day to a group of ladies it's going to take what Winston Churchill warned the British people it would cost to win the Second World War: blood, tears, oil and sweat, to get the men out in the lead, and I believe it. And I believe a lot of women are going to go through spiritual agony before its done, because you've been so used to holding the purse, making the decisions, writing the checks and telling your family what to do, that with the best motives in the world, you're going to have to go through a lot of self-denial to stop doing it. I know a dear, precious couple, sweet people, both of them, far away from here, and the wife said, 'Oh,' she said, 'I wish my husband would take the lead.' 'Well,' we said, 'why don't you step back and let him?' So she did. The first thing he decided—they were Lutherans—was the whole family should be baptized. 'Oh no,' she said, 'that'll be contrary to the church.'

'Well,' we said, 'you're willing to let your husband lead, provided he does what you think he ought to do. That's not leading, that's back-seat driving.' [laughter]

All right. Now, I want to come to the [___total garble_____44:26:5] second part of my message—the unfolding of the same program of God in the Old Testament. And I want to read from two chapters in the prophet Isaiah. And God has been more and more quickening these chapters and this passage to me. I couldn't have imagined a year ago that I would see all that God has shown me. It's in Isaiah 59, verse 19, through Isaiah, chapter 60, verse 5. I want to read these and then briefly unfold the divine program. Isaiah 69—I beg your pardon 59—there's no 69. Fifty-

7001rem Climax in Four Stages nine, beginning at verse 19, and reading through into chapter 60:

> "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun."

Now, I believe that this means that what follows is God's program to achieve that result, that all the earth shall fear the name of the Lord, from the west, and from the east. All right, now, then:

> "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and their

> kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces [but the correct translation is 'wealth'— 'the wealth'] of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

Let's look at those verses together for a little while. As I've said, I believe that this is God's program to achieve the statement made at the beginning of verse 19, 'So shall they fear the name of the LORD, from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun.' There is to be a demonstration of God's power and glory such that the whole world will stand in awe of Almighty God.

Now then, this is the outline of how it is to be brought to pass. 'When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him,' and I believe the past decade has seen the fulfillment of that promise. Speaking only tonight of America, but I believe the same could be held true of most other nations, but specifically of the United States, I believe that in the last two decades, since the close of World War II, it is not an exaggeration, it is beyond question,

that the enemy has come in like a flood. Of course, by the enemy, we understand Satan and his evil forces. And I would say that there is no major area of American life which has not been invaded by the forces of Satan in the last twenty years. Whether you talk of the churches, the seminaries, the schools, the colleges, the universities, political life, race relations, whatever you look at, you can say there has been an invasion, a flood-like invasion, by satanic forces, which mainly are the forces of demons. I accept this as a fact. I don't want to dwell on it, because I'm not interested in advertising Satan more than is strictly necessary. I believe our business as preachers is to advertise the Lord.

I had such a lesson about two or three years ago. I was in a full gospel convention and the speaker was not a full gospel preacher, and I think he was like a duck out of water to start with. And his theme was, 'things are getting worse.' And believe me, he certainly proved his point. I would say that he spent 55 minutes telling us how bad things were getting. Then, I suppose he spent something like five minutes telling us that we needed a Holy Ghost revival. I don't recall that he spoke one sentence as to how we could *have* a Holy Ghost revival. I have never seen the people of God leave a meeting more discouraged than at that point.

Now, my personal conviction is, that's exactly how *not* to do it. It is true that things are getting worse. Have you noticed with—let me say this frankly—with much fundamentalist interpretation of prophecy, it's all the bad that they see? There's a very well-known book out at the moment, I don't think I'll name it, but essentially, though it's very interesting and relevant, all God's so-called 'spokesmen' can see is the bad, the dark, the shadow. I'm not interested in that. Now, I believe it. My personal conviction is, if you're not willing to acknowledge the dark, you'll never see the light. And I used to say that before I was even converted. I used to say to my friends, 'If you won't acknowledge the evil, you'll never acknowledge the good.' And I believe that's true. The people that don't really believe in the devil don't really believe in God, either. The people that don't really believe in evil don't really believe in good.

Now, I believe in the devil, I believe in evil, I believe that in a certain sense it is absolutely true that things are getting worse. And they're going to get worse and worse for a little while longer. But that's not what impressed me. I don't believe everything is going to get worse. People say, 'Brother Prince, doesn't the Bible teach that everything's going to get worse?' I say, 'Would you mind showing me where the Bible teaches that?' 'Well, I thought it was...—,' but they never come up with a text. I said, 'I'll give you one: 'Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived' [2 Timothy 3:13]. But if you're not an evil man or a seducer, that doesn't apply to you.' I believe the darkness is getting darker, but the light is getting brighter. And you have a decision as to which you will look at.

All right. I believe the enemy has come in like a flood. Now, I accept this as a fact. God showed me this about five or six years ago, and I've been preaching it ever since. The enemy has come in like a flood. At that point, God, the Holy Spirit, will lift up a standard against the enemy. God said He would do it, and God has done it. This is the charismatic renewal. That's precisely what it is. It is the Holy Spirit lifting up a standard against the forces of Satan, which have invaded every area of the inheritance of God's people.

Now, in an ancient army, the standard-bearer was a key person, because when the army was in danger of being defeated and scattered, the commander would tell the

standard-bearer to find a piece of rising ground, a hilltop or some such thing, take his stand there and lift up the standard, so that it could be seen by all around. Now, the troops were trained that when they saw their standard lifted up, they were to re-gather around the base of the standard.

Now, this is what has happened. The standard-bearer of God's army is the blessed Holy Spirit. The Commander-in-Chief is God Himself. And in the hour of greatest need, the Lord said to the Holy Spirit, 'Lift up the standard where everyone can see it.' And you know the standard that the Holy Spirit uplifts? He only uplifts one standard, that is, Jesus, that's right. 'When he has come, he will glorify me' [John 16:14]. And you know what the charismatic renewal is? It's people in every section of Christendom turning and looking at the standard uplifted by the Holy Spirit and saying, 'That's my standard. That's where I belong.'

And do you know what surprises me? There are two things that surprise me. First of all, I'm surprised at a lot of the people that never have turned around and looked at the standard. Secondly, I'm as surprised at a lot of the people that I found round the standard whom I never would have expected to find there. Both these things surprise me. I never thought there'd be any Roman Catholics around the standard, to tell you the truth. But I find more Catholics than Pentecostals.

I'm not going on, but this is a dividing line throughout the whole of God's people. Every person has got to face this question. When the standard is uplifted, do you acknowledge it? Do you say, 'I'm a servant of Jesus Christ'? 'My faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ'? Not in the Baptist church, the Southern Baptists, the Pentecostals, the Roman Catholics, the Episcopalians—those are not my standard. My standard is the Lord Jesus Christ. You have to say to yourself this question. 'Am I a Baptist first, or a Christian first?' 'Am I a Catholic first, or a Christian first?' 'Am I an Episcopalian first, or a Christian first?' and so on with every other denomination.

You have to make up your mind: Are you going to gather around the foot of the standard, or are you going to go on as if everything was still the same because you have your church program, you have your retirement program, you have your manse, your car allowance and all you're interested in is maintaining the status quo for another 15 years. You've got to make the decision. And there's a great deal of searching of heart going on. I warned my fellow Pentecostal preachers about 10 years ago. I said, 'Don't imagine that this move will leave you intact. You're going to have just as much heart-searching and agonizing to do as the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, and all the rest.'

Because the whole church of Jesus Christ is being confronted with the challenge of the uplifted standard which is the Lord Jesus, and everybody has to decide, 'Do I belong there, or don't I belong there? Am I going to go, or am I going to stay where I am?'

All right. But don't imagine that that's the end of God's program. On the contrary, things are just beginning to move when the standard is lifted up and the people begin to gather. Now, we come back directly into line with Acts 3:19. The next verse says, 'the redeemer [and in Romans 11:26, this is translated 'the deliverer'] shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.'

Now, Zion, I believe, as I've said before, is the name for God's people collectively, both Israel and the church. The redeemer, the deliverer, is coming to God's people and to those who do what? Turn from transgression. This is where we align directly with Acts 3:19, 'Repent and turn, that your sins may be blotted out.' This is the point to which God has now brought His people by the Charismatic renewal as it has proceeded this far. Far from having fulfilled the purposes of God, it has just set them in motion.

> "Now, the vital decision for each one is, 'Am I willing to turn from my transgression?' You say, 'Well, Brother Prince, what is my transgression?'"

I'll tell you. Isaiah 53:6: *'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.'* Whether it be the Baptist way, the Pentecostal way, the Catholic way, makes no difference. If it's your way and not God's way, there is one thing that God requires you to do and that is to turn from your way to His way—to repent. And it says the redeemer or the deliverer (and here is the deliverance ministry again in full focus) will come unto them that turn from their own stubbornness, disobedience, sectarianism, self-pleasing, self-righteousness, and will yield to God's requirements. And then, deliverance will come. My personal conviction is that no one will make it to the end of this age in the will and purposes of God who does not submit to the ministry of deliverance—from evil spirits, let's be specific. I do not say that every believer needs deliverance, I don't say that. But I say every believer must face up to the question of whether he does or not. And in my opinion, most Christians need it, whether they are ministers or lay people is irrelevant.

This is simply my experience and I'll tell you the person that I found it out most clearly is in Brother Prince. I know one thing, that when I was confronted with this challenge that

God began to deal with me about His program for the end of the age, I needed deliverance. People sometimes wonder how, —Well, how I know so well what goes on in others when they're delivered. The answer is: I found it out by my own experience. But I don't always say that, because that's my business, not yours. But I'll tell you this, that I don't believe anybody will make it through in God's will and purposes for the close of this age who refuses the ministry of deliverance. Because the deliverer is to come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression—pride, stubbornness, self will, self-righteousness, all the things that look so bad in others but seem all right to you. You have to turn, I have to turn. God's people have to turn. This is not optional. It's God's demand that we turn. I don't believe most of us have any conception of how far away we've been all these years from the standards and requirements of God.

Goodness me, fifteen years ago, I thought I was a full-gospel preacher. I thought I preached the full gospel. I preached everything I knew. I didn't know any more to preach. And believe me, I preached salvation, I preached the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking with tongues. I preached divine healing, preached the coming of the Lord, and when God faced me with a personal challenge, I was almost unwilling to admit that there were things I didn't know that I needed to know. I bless God for a certain day, early in 1962, when on a cliff top on the northwest coast of Denmark, I told the Lord that if there was more, I wanted to go. If I had not said yes to God then, who knows where I would be today. I could easily have been dead. And if not dead physically, dead spiritually. I have seen many of my friends in the ministry die spiritually behind a pulpit, go on with the same sermons, the same program, the same activity, 7:30 every Sunday night. What would've happened if the Holy Spirit had changed His mind and decided to save people on Monday night instead of Sunday night? What would we do?

I faced that problem, too, in the church that I pastored, my church in Seattle. People got saved all the time outside the church and every day except Sunday. And I had to decide, was I going to dictate to the Holy Spirit, or was I going to let the Holy Spirit be Lord? It isn't easy for preachers to change their ways. It isn't easy for Christians, but God requires that we turn from our wicked ways, our self pleasing, living by our own standards, living by the standards of the Baptist convention or the Assemblies of God. You know how the traditions of the elders arose? Do you know? Out of the minutes of board meetings, I'm sure they did. I have been in groups that were full gospel that were much more concerned at what was written in the minute book of the last board meeting than what was written in the Word of God. And they weren't Methodists, believe me. They were full-gospel. You could forgive the Episcopalians for living that way, but what about the Pentecostals? Don't tell me they don't, because I know them from inside. I know how they live.

My son-in-law was at a meeting today in a Pentecostal church in this city, and I won't say which city, because it's on tape, and they had a beautiful get-together and brought a meal together. Well, that's wonderful. I believe in that. But I just said, all the same, because that's the problem of that denomination—it's overeating. [laughter]

Now, I hope that doesn't get around, but it's the truth. See, when the Episcopalian turns to the martini, this, well, let's say, Pentecostal holiness (because it wasn't, see . . .) will turn to the cookie jar. That's their way out. One is a way out just as much as the other. Each is equally deadly in the last resort. And I suppose more people die of overeating than die of alcohol, I don't know. But I'm just telling you, each of us has got a little set of standards. As long as I live by standards A, B, C, D, E, F and G, in my little book, God, don't ask me to change. God is asking all of us to change. You, and me included.

All right. Verse 21. Now we get into the glory. But you see, you've got to turn. Verse 20 is the antechamber to all that follows of blessing and glory. If you don't turn, brother, you'll be left out. God is moving. You can't stop Him. You've only got two choices: To move with Him or get left behind. If you want to move with Him, you've got to meet His requirements. All right. Verse 21:

> "'This is my covenant with them [With whom? With them that turn from transgression. It is very clear], saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever. [You notice the restoration of family relationships?] The spirit that I put upon you, the word that I give to you, will be in your children and in your children's children and God's people will never again live without the Holy Spirit."

This is God's covenant at the close of the age for those who turn from their transgressions. Now, as a result of this we come into the glory of the sixtieth chapter.

> "Arise, shine [this is spoken to the people of God]; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold the darkness shall cover the earth and the gross darkness the peoples of the earth."

There's the darkness. Things are getting worse and worse. It's perfectly true. But which way you look will decide your reaction. The darkness is getting darker, but the light is getting brighter.

> "But the LORD shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

This is the church that Jesus Christ is going to bring forth at the close of this age. Now in case you want a New Testament Scripture for this kind of a church at the close of this age, keep your finger in Isaiah for a moment, and turn with me to Ephesians, the fifth chapter, verses 25, 26 and 27. Ephesians, the fifth chapter, verses 25, 26 and 27:

> "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself [on the cross] for it; [to redeem the church by his blood. Listen:] that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

You see, you must understand this: Jesus, it says in 1 John, Chapter 5, verses 6 & 7, 'This is he that came by water and by blood. Not by water only, but by water and by blood, and it is the spirit that beareth witness.' Jesus came to die on the cross to redeem the church with His blood. But He rose as our great high priest to sanctify the church, as every sacrifice under the law of Moses had to be sanctified with the washing of water, which is the Word. And only the combination of the blood and the Word, redemption and instruction, can bring forth a church which will answer the description which Paul then proceeds to give.

See, your salvation—your being ready for the coming of the Lord—depends just as much on your being instructed out of the Word as it does on your putting your faith in the blood of Jesus. It is not the blood without the water, nor is it the water without the blood; it's by water *and* by blood, and it's the Spirit that bears witness, both to the Word and to the blood.

All right. Now, with that background, the sanctifying and cleansing of the church by the washing of water by the Word, we come to the climax, verse 27:

> "That he [Christ] might present [the church] to himself a glorious church, (notice this fits in exactly with Isaiah 60, 'the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.')"

The word *glory* in the Bible means 'the manifest, sensible presence of Almighty God.' That's

the correct meaning of the word, *glory*. When the glory is there, you don't have to have it by faith, you have it by feeling. The glory can be felt, it can be seen; it is sensible, it is perceptible to human senses. So, Jesus is going to present to Himself a church that is impregnated, filled with the visible, manifest presence of Almighty God, a glorious church

That is the church for which Jesus Christ is coming at the close of this age. The Scripture is absolutely clear.

Now, in line with this, we turn back to Isaiah 60 and see the picture of this church as the age draws to its close and as things are getting darker and more desperate all around in the world, out of this darkness there emerges the most glorious thing that God has ever shown this earth, which is the church of Jesus Christ, ready for the coming of the Lord.

> "Arise, shine, for thy light is come. The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, for behold the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples [plural] but the LORD shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

Now, let us look quickly at the consequences of the manifestation of the church of Jesus Christ, in glory, at the close of this age. Verse 3:

> "[For nations] shall come to thy light, and [their] kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Whole nations and their rulers will turn to God through the testimony of this kind of a church. I believe that. I believe

the United States will be one of those nations. I believe there's going to be a national turning to God of this nation, with many of its leaders, but it's dependent upon a church emerging that can command their respect and answer their problems. Surely it is an indictment of the Christian church, let alone any others, that the political leaders of the United States have to go to Jeanne Dixon for advice about the future. You may say many things about that, but surely, above all else, it indicates the complete spiritual bankruptcy of the church of Jesus Christ. Because when Pharaoh wanted to know about the future, he went to Joseph. And when Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know about the future, he went to Daniel. And both of them found Joseph and Daniel, the children of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit, ten times better than all the magicians, astrologers, soothsayers and all the rest of those heathen kingdoms. And it should be the same in the United States. If leaders of nations want counsel, they should go to people that have the Spirit of the Lord because we have more to give them, better answers, better counsel than any other source. I'm not criticizing Jeanne Dixon, understand me. I'm just pointing out that she's a challenge to the true church of Jesus Christ. All right. Verse 4:

> "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side."

Notice now, the young people come back. Which is just exactly what is beginning to happen today. Our sons and our daughters. Remember Acts 2:17?:

> "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions; your old men shall dream dreams."

There is to be the greatest ingathering of young people to the kingdom of God that history has ever recorded, and we are just on the threshold of it now. These are words of promise and encouragement for those have gone the route that I have outlined. All right, Verse 5:

> "Then thou [the church] shalt see."

The first thing the church has got to do is learn to see the way God sees. I have to confess I've been in the faith thirty years and more, and I'm only just beginning to glimpse a little of what I know God has been trying to show me for thirty years. I'm ashamed and embarrassed when I think how long it has taken me to begin to see what God is trying to show me. And you know, my reaction every time God begins to show it to me is this: 'It couldn't be true! It's too good.'

See, we've been conditioned to believe that religion must be miserable and that anything God shows us is going to be unpleasant. The majority of preachers preach that way. I have observed it time and time again. If you submit to God, it's going to be unpleasant. Well, I'll tell you one thing. If you don't submit to God, it will be a whole lot more unpleasant. Let's say that. I'm not so sure about the unpleasantness. I know there is bitter in the Christian life. I know there is persecution, but the outstanding characteristic of Christians of the New Testament was love, joy and peace. And with that, we can take the unpleasant when it comes. All right:

> "Then thou shalt see, and flow together, [isn't that beautiful?]"

That's what the church is doing today. It's flowing together. Streams are coming down from every section of Christendom and they're meeting in what is going to be the greatest river of human history: the church of Jesus Christ on the move. I believe myself that every section of Christendom: the Catholics, the Protestants, the Baptists, and so on and so on, all have a deposit of divine truth, and each has a deposit of error, too. Each one. And I believe that as these rivers begin to flow from every section of Christendom, God has got some kind of a cache-ment system at the mouth of each stream that is going to strain out error and only allow truth to come through, because nothing but the truth of God will be allowed to flow in this great river, when the church really flows together. We're just starting it right now.

> "Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, [you will be overawed; you will be awestruck by the revelation of the greatness of what God is going to do. I firmly believe this. It's not the fear of disaster, it's the fear of the greatness of Almighty God and His project.] Then thou shalt see, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged;"

If ever there was one thing that religious people needed, it's to have their hearts enlarged. I'm sure that the greatest problem with God in dealing with us is our little-mindedness. We just cannot conceive of anything bigger than the little pond we grew up in. and God has got to wait until our hearts are enlarged before He can turn over to us the climax of His program for this age. Now, let's look. When we have met these conditions:

> "the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces [but the correct translation is 'wealth'] of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.
> The wealth of the nations shall come to thee."

Now people can preach whatever they like about money, but do you know what I believe about money? It's important. Anybody that says it's not important only says that in church. Now, as soon as they get outside church, they talk differently and act differently. That's my conviction. And I believe something else. That all the money in the world belongs to one person. You know who that is? God. None of it belongs to the devil. The book of Haggai [2:8] says, 'The silver is mine, saith the Lord, the gold is mine.' And Jesus said in John, chapter 8 [10:10], 'the devil is a thief.' [8:44 says the devil is a murderer & a liar.] If he has any, he stole it. It does not belong to him. Most Christians have the attitude it really belongs to the devil and they are a little embarrassed that they have any of it. I have heard time after time Christians apologizing for having more than a ___indecipherable, sorry_____. (08:13:4) I'll tell you the level of God's provision. It's abundance. And I can justify that by Scripture after Scripture after Scripture. It's not my purpose to do it tonight. But we have been wooed into a silly idea that it's sinful to have money, and then we're sinful anyhow and we feel condemned. I believe that God is waiting for the church to come to the place where it can handle what He is willing to make available. The wealth of the nations. And as I have said and some of you have heard me, since the beginning of this decade I have begun to pray that the wealth of the United States, the most wealthy nation in history, shall be turned over to God for His purposes. And when it's turned over to God—you know God doesn't handle money in person, you know that?

Whom is it turned over to? You and me—that we may do with it what God has been waiting for us to do.

All right. Let me give you two other verses. Three other verses, we close. Skipping down this chapter, I could preach on them all, but come down to verse 12:

> "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

I personally believe that this is where the destiny of nations is being decided. Those nations that will serve God's purposes will be preserved. Those nations that resist God's purposes will be utterly destroyed. And I pray for this nation that it will not be one of those nations that will deliberately take a stand against the purposes of God at the close of this age. This is the touchstone, the division, between the nations that will be saved, the nations that will perish. Those nations that will not serve God's people and God's purposes will utterly perish.

And then, in restoration, that beautiful word we have there, number 3 on the chalkboard, verse 17. Look at this for restoration. If ever there was a beautiful word for restoration, it's all been broken down, it's lying in ruin and decay, we remember the desolations of many generations, we look back and think how beautiful it must have been, and God says, 'Wait a minute, now. I'm not just going to give you back what you had. I'm going to give you back much more than you ever had.' Listen. Verse 17:

> "For brass I will bring gold, for iron I will bring silver, for wood brass, and for stones iron:"

Whatever you had before, restoration will give it back at a higher level. If it was brass before, it will be gold. If it was iron before, it'll be silver. If it was stones, it will be iron. And so on. Restoration is on a higher level than the initial level that was taken away. This is always true. Adam had much but lost it. When Jesus came, He didn't merely restore what Adam lost, He restored an inheritance on a higher level. Restoration from God is always on a higher level than that which was lost by sin and backsliding. And finally, verse 22, all this can be taken together in context:

> "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time."

See, when God's time comes, He moves with amazing rapidity. Isn't that true today? And I'll tell you the rapidity with which God is going to move is going to take our breath away. And listen, just one little one will become a thousand,

a small one shall become a strong nation. When God's time comes.

I've just had the privilege of being in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in connection with the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. Now, I didn't know anything about the Pilgrims, and I don't know too much about them now. But being the newest American, I felt I ought to get to know and I had this privilege of this invitation to go. As I say, the two other speakers were President Nixon and Billy Graham, and—of course, not at the same time, let me add that. But previous, up the list, you see? And I had the privilege of being shown round Plymouth by two of the local experts, which is one of the privileges that preachers sometimes enjoy, and I was brought face to face with the Pilgrims in a totally new way. To me, I don't know how it is with you, but they were just some remote old fogies that were somewhere way back in history. As a matter of fact, I have to say that the hairstyle and general dress [was] very much in line with the latest amongst American youth. And you say, 'Praise the Lord for that.' They had their hair long, beards, and so on. In fact, somebody said they were the hippies of their day. Now, I don't believe that, but the hippies of our day could well line up with the Pilgrims, and that's what I believe could easily happen.

And as I meditated on this, one of the things that blessed me. See, I—, You don't know how little I know about that kind of thing. I discovered. I happen to be from Cambridge University, you probably know that. That really, Cambridge was the birthplace of the Pilgrim fathers. Did you know that? There you are, see? Actually, the teaching about religion and the church and divine order that inspired the Pilgrims to go came primarily from various ministers, professors, associated with Cambridge University. One of them, named John Robinson, about whom a book is being published in November of this year, was, like I was at one time, a fellow of Cambridge University. And I was really blessed, because you know, if I'd lived in those days, do you know what I would've been? I would've been a Pilgrim. Everything they believed, I believe. Everything they stood for, I stand for. Really, that blessed me, because I feel to be more in line with them than most modern Americans. I feel I'm in the direct line of spiritual descent from that little group of people that landed there and struggled.

And you know the thought that came to me? 'That which is born of the spirit is spirit, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh. And whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.' Where God can bring forth a spiritual birth, it brings forth something that nothing in this world can ever overcome. And I really believe you could take that last verse of Isaiah 60 and preach a message on the Pilgrims: 'A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one shall become a strong nation.' And I believe that God has not fulfilled His purposes of divine destiny for the United States of America. I believe God has yet more to do, and I believe that it's to be done in this decade and this age in which we live, and I believe that God is offering you and me the privilege of sharing in what He is doing. Do not be negative about your nation. I am sick and tired of hearing Americans apologize for America. Now, there are a lot of evils in America, and a lot of things that we could wish changed, but when you've been around the world and lived in other nations and seen how they live, believe me, friend, you should thank God every night of your life that you were born and brought up in the United States of America.

Now, coming from a Britisher, that's rather good, isn't it? See, I actually believe, to be honest, and I trust you'll not think I'm conceited, that God chose me to tell the American people that. Because coming from an American, it wouldn't mean much. But when the British can see it, then, there's something to it. Believe me, you've no idea. You've never been British, most of you. If you have, you understand. The British do not find it easy to adjust to the fact that another nation is the leader of the free world, by no means.

Well, that's the end of my message. But I trust that you'll take it to heart and I trust that you'll ask God to give you the ability to see what He's doing, to find your place in it, to have your heart enlarged that you may begin to believe with God for what He wants to do, because as I understand it, God is limited to the extent of our faith. If we cannot believe for what God wants to do, then God cannot do it through us. What God is looking for now, at the close of this age, is a generation that will believe Him. Amen.

Let's stand to our feet and praise the Lord. Glory to God. Thank You, Jesus. Praise Your wonderful name. I thank You, Lord. I give You the glory. I give You the honor, I give You the praise. Come down, Lord, in Your glory. Deluge us tonight with a new revelation of Yourself, Your glory, Your power, Your purposes. Thank You, Lord, in the name of Jesus.

We turn ourselves loose to the Spirit of God. We will renounce our inhibitions our fears and just turn over to Almighty God and trust thee, Lord, to have thy way in our lives, in this nation, in the situation in the world today, Lord. We claim the victory in Jesus' name for the people of God and the purposes of God. We declare Satan a defeated foe; an enemy cast down and dethroned. We declare him a thief, not the rightful owner of that which is God's, and we claim,

Lord, in this closing generation, an abundance of provision for the people and purposes of God. We pray for the United States, that this nation shall be awakened by the Spirit of God to see thy grace, thy goodness, thy mercy and thy favors. To repent and to make themselves available, that thou mayest complete the destiny which thou hast ordained for this nation. And Lord, we'll be careful to give thee all the honor and glory, in Jesus name. And all the people said, Amen and Praise the Lord!

Sermon
Transcript: MA-7001-100-ENG
Last Updated: 16 Sept 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources

