

**THE BEGINNING OF THE END IS HERE,
WHAT YOU MUST DO TO BE READY**

BIRTH PANGS

RON CANTOR

FOREWORD BY WARD SIMPSON

Ron Cantor's book on the end-times, *Birth Pangs*, is biblical, clear, bold, compassionate, and practical. Thank you, Ron, for your many years of consistent labor and serving others in the Kingdom, because of your love for Yeshua and His beloved people.

MIKE BICKLE
International House of Prayer of Kansas City

I am grateful that in the past number of years I have been privileged to cross paths with Ron Cantor. He has become a dear friend. I am always attentive to his insights and his understanding prophetically of what unfolds as we move toward all that Christ intends in his Church and the Kingdom. His heart is impassioned for the truth that is in Christ Jesus. "Birth Pangs" is a word in season from a brother who continually and consistently bears witness to the hope that lies within him. Thanks, Ron, for being a faithful witness.

DR. MARK CHIRONNA
Lead Pastor, Church on the Living Edge, Orlando

We are in critical days that call for wise action and positioning. Ron Cantor is a voice I trust in the midst of chaos and disruption. His book, *Birth Pangs*, will prepare you to stand unwavering in your faith in this vital hour. It is a must read for the Body of Christ.

PATRICIA KING
Author, Minister, Television Host

Ron Cantor writes with clarity, passion and a trustworthy spiritual compass in these very relevant chapters. You may not agree with it all but I hope you will agree with most of what he writes in this book. His intuitive sense, combined with keen knowledge of what is going on, makes for an important read.

DR. DANIEL C. JUSTER
Restoration from Zion

Ron Cantor does not mince words. This book pulsates with an urgent message for you and for me: PREPARE! *Birth Pangs* will help you get ready for the days coming upon us—days of both weighty trials and the weight of God's glory.

EITAN SHISHKOFF
Founder, Tents of Mercy
Kiryat Yam, Israel

I believe *Birth Pangs* is one of the most consequential and urgent books written this year—because it is more than a book—it is a timeless resource that answers many of the questions being asked today in light of the world-changing events of 2020. *Birth Pangs* is filled with scripture and biblical perspectives for the last days in which we find ourselves.

WARD SIMPSON
President, GOD TV

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Note: We didn't go the traditional publishing route, as that would have added six months to a year until publication. We felt this was a 'now' word. If you happen to find any typos, please send them to info@uptozion.net. Thank you.

DEDICATION

To the end-time saints, who will endure until the end.

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Revelation 3:5 NKJ)

FOREWORD— WARD SIMPSON

I believe this is one of the most consequential and urgent books written this year—because it is more than a book—it is a timeless resource that answers many of the questions being asked today in light of the world-changing events of 2020. *Birth Pangs* is filled with scripture and biblical perspectives for these last days in which we find ourselves.

Regardless of your theology, Ron clearly delivers the word that Yeshua (Jesus) is coming again and it could be very soon. Too many believers have become **complacent—a feeling of contentment or security, often while unaware of some imminent danger**. Proverbs 1:32 says “complacency will destroy you.” How sad is this? What a tragedy! Thus, the reason for this book: God is preparing us for His Son’s return. He is fulfilling Scripture; we are experiencing *the beginning of birth pangs*. He is sending us signals that Messiah’s return could be around the corner and is warning us to heed to His words and to prepare to meet the King. This book touches the very heart of God, by sounding the alarm, calling the bride to make herself ready, and to prepare for the coming of the bridegroom.

Birth Pangs will certainly open your understanding of the times in which we are living, tell you what to expect, and how to prepare for the coming days. This is not a time to be *inactive*, but rather a time to be *proactive*. This is a sobering day we are living in, yet exciting and expectant at the same time. This is what we have been waiting for! This has been our destination and it is certainly our destiny.

Jesus is coming! Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound the alarm! God is not only calling His people to prepare but He is reminding us of the urgency of the hour of *harvest time*. It is every believer’s responsibility to share the good news of Messiah to a lost world—to be agents of change. “*For we are God’s workmanship ... (His thermostat!) ... created in Messiah Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” (Ephesians 2:10)

Do you know the difference between a thermometer and a thermostat? **A thermometer only reads the atmosphere, while a thermostat works to change it.** It’s not enough to look at your world, your community, your workplace, or your family and say, “Everything will be ok.” That is false security! That is withholding truth. That is potentially allowing people to slip

into eternity, unprepared and unrepentant.

Birth Pangs is a word from God and clearly points to Scripture and not to some vision or dream which is based on experiences rather than the word of God. Sadly, there is so much of this going on, to the point that it has created much confusion. Dreams and visions, as valid as they are, are going viral on the Internet; it has become the wild west of prophetic words with no accountability. “Here is my dream,” says one; and “Here is my vision,” says another. But... *Birth Pangs is the word of the Lord.*

“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **Be on guard, keep awake.** For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore, stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— **lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!**” (Mark 13: 32-37 NASB)

Ron Cantor is my very best friend and co-laborer in the Kingdom for Messiah Yeshua. I speak with Ron on a regular basis, strategizing and planning our next steps. We have been on a glorious journey together these past 20 years. I have witnessed how Ron quickly responds to the call of God on his life. Lydia and I held our breath when Ron and Elana moved from America to Israel with their three young daughters at the end of the second violent intifada, not knowing what tomorrow had in store. I was totally amazed how Ron learned to speak, and even write, in Hebrew, how he sacrificed prestigious ministry opportunities in order to obey his calling to the lost sheep of Israel and how God uses him to minister to hundreds of thousands of people all over the world.

Ron never backs down and never retreats, but always continues to move forward from strength to strength. When Ron hears from God, he drops everything to quickly obey the master. **This very thing happened with this book.** Ron and I were planning and setting deadlines when all of a sudden, this book was dropped into his spirit. This word from the Lord caused Ron to take off to a private location to pray and to write. This word became the priority and everything else had to wait. When a new chapter came to him, he would shut himself in and give himself to writing and then excitingly reappear

with new insights and renewed passion. I witnessed first-hand the birth and creation of this book. It has been a blessing to me and I pray it will be a huge blessing to you also. May the Lord use this book to enrich your life, prepare for the coming days and stir your hunger and passion for souls. Now is the time to hear what God is saying to His people and *to get ready*.

With love and great anticipation for the days to come,

Ward Simpson
President, GOD TV

INTRODUCTION

Note: We live in a day when people get offended easily, jump to conclusions and attack each other. Believers are not exempt. I doubt many people will agree with everything I have written here, but may I encourage you to seek to grasp the spirit of what is written, even if you don't agree with every word or opinion. Thank you.

In March of 2020, just as we were realizing that the Coronavirus was for real and could have a devastating effect, I heard two words in prayer. I was asking God if there was anything He was saying through this virus. The words I heard were: **BE READY!**

I immediately knew what God was saying to me. Tough days were ahead. I grabbed my Bible (I actually read the Bible online, but 'grabbing my Bible' sounds much more dramatic :-)) and instinctively went to Matthew 24, where Yeshua unpacks His end-time teaching. Verse eight jumped out at me: ***These are the beginning of birth pangs.***

Over the next two months it was like God was dropping chapters for a book into my spirit. But this is more than a book. It is encouragement and a strong warning. If you embrace its message, it could save your soul...literally.

Birth pangs come in waves. There is intense pain, followed by a lull. I have witnessed my dear wife give birth to three children. When the contractions come, they are intense. Then, though, there is a brief respite. She was calm. Was it over? No! The next one came even harder. Just when everyone was thinking that things seemed to be improving regarding COVID-19...

- President Trump was calling for the USA to open by Easter
- Prime Minister Netanyahu was getting worldwide praise for how he handled the plague and Israel started opening up just after Passover
- Famous prophets were saying that Corona would end on Passover (like the plagues of Egypt) or that an Easter heat wave was going to burn up Corona. *They said that God said that!*

Then, *boom*, another birth pang! George Floyd was murdered (in my opinion) by police officers in Minnesota. Protests and riots broke out all over America. Sadly, the church did very little to take advantage of the moment and reach out to Black America with the love of Yeshua. Some did, but most, instead,

went to their political corners, not considering that God might be speaking to us.

Right in the midst of that, Corona surged again. Just a few days ago, we had 8,000 new cases—a new record for Israel and the world leader per capita (it would be like 285,600 new cases in one day in America)! Another birth pang. Then Lebanon: the Beirut port exploded on what looked like a nuclear blast on video.

And then, out of nowhere, President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu announce normalization between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. And now Bahrain has come in. Others like Sudan and Oman are expected to make peace with Israel in the coming weeks or months. (Everyone told Trump that if he moves the embassy to Jerusalem and recognizes it as Israel's capital, it would devastate the Peace Process ... guess they were wrong!) This may be the most significant international event of President Trump's tenure. It also could have significant end-time implications, as many prophecy scholars predict at least pseudo peace between Israel and the Arabs, leading to a third Temple. Definitely, *another birth pang!*

Birth Pangs in Judaism

Many in Judaism see these birth pangs as a valid metaphor for the end-times.

“The period leading to the coming of the Mashiach (Messiah) is referred to as *chevlei Mashiach*, or “birth pangs of the Messiah” and is compared to the period leading up to the birth of a child. In the same way an expectant mother's pains increase as she gets closer to giving birth, so the period leading to the arrival of Mashiach may be a difficult one for the Jewish People.”

I was very surprised to find that many see the final days before Messiah comes lasting seven years!

“The days we mention here are to be understood as seven years, similar to the verse in Genesis (24:55) where Laban and his mother wanted Rebecca to delay her departure by “*yamim*” [Hebrew for “days,” i.e., a year. These years which are viewed as the birth pangs of *Mashiach*,” *last for seven years* during which Israel will be refined spiritually in preparation for his arrival. He will then make his appearance during the eighth year.”ⁱⁱ

Megachurch pastors were saying that soon we would be back to normal, not realizing that God might be speaking to us about a *new normal*. Others adapted and have reached thousands, even millions, via Zoom and the Internet. “Prophets” were quick to say, “All is well, and the stock market will rise again. Prosperity is coming! God is good; He would never send a virus.”

These were the same prophets who never saw Corona coming! But now they are qualified to tell us when it might end? Where is the accountability for using God’s name on a worldwide stage and misquoting Him? Where is the repentance?

One of America’s premier prophetic voices was sharing from his car in mid-January about how 2020 was going to be *the year of abundance—of accumulation*. At the same time that he was sharing this message of false hope, the Coronavirus was quietly spreading all over the globe.

But some did see it coming. My dear friend, Rachel Boskey, who lives in the Negev desert here in Israel, recently shared:

“On January 27, 2020 I wrote these words to our whole mailing list: ‘For the last few years I’ve sensed that the year 2020 would be a time of a quickening pace in the events leading to the Lord’s return. Already I feel this is happening and it points to our increasing need for spiritual sobriety and prayerful vigilance. We ask the Lord to keep our eyes focused on Him and on His call in our lives to see ‘all Israel saved’ and ‘Israel the exceedingly great army’ of Ezekiel 37:10.”

People paid little attention to this when she wrote it back in January. That was before the world began to shake. But she is one of a few who did see this before it hit. But we were not listening.

Another Pastor had a dream in December 2019, that he shared with others at the time. In the dream, he envisioned a calendar and March (Covid-19) and June (George Floyd protests) were underscored. He sees people marching, protesting, and even people wearing masks. There were lines of people going into hospitals. He is shown ventilators and, “I saw people who were very, very sick. I saw newspaper headlines trumpeting thousands of people getting sick.”

“Then I saw cities on fire. I saw buildings being burned. I saw protesters with masks ... I saw shotguns in the air ... and barriers within cities.”

Finally, he hears the words “*Brace yourself—brace yourself.*” Birth pangs!

<https://youtu.be/6TdpMSMP9x4>

Pastor John Kilpatrick, a longtime friend, and someone I consider extremely prophetic had a dream in December as well. He heard, “Darkness is about to degenerate into gross darkness.” The Lord told him to “tell them (believers) to *be prepared*.” “[The Lord] said, ‘but I want to tell you, the angels are coming to help you ... it is going to get so severe ... I am going to send my angels to help get in the harvest, and they’ll be working with you.’”

Kilpatrick spoke of harvest “in the midst of some of the deepest, darkest darkness that the world has ever seen ... Gross darkness is coming and there are going to be severe perilous times.”

I italicized those words, “be prepared” from his dream, because as you will see in Chapter One, that is exactly what I heard in prayer: *Be ready!*

While God *was* speaking, these prophetic words were few and far between.

Once the virus hit hard, Christians, mostly in America, began to scream about their rights being violated, forgetting that our lives belong to Yeshua. Paul said:

“I have been crucified with Messiah and *I no longer live*, but Messiah lives in me,” (Galatians 2:20a) and, “*You are not your own*; you were bought at a price.” (1 Corinthians 6:19a-20b)

There is no question that some are seeking to use the virus for political reasons. The media can’t help itself. However, even if we (conservatives) convinced the media and Democrats to be honest, it would not bring about a Utopia. No, we need a *heavenly visitation*—and an invasion of God’s Holy Spirit. This is a spiritual battle.

I believe with all my heart that God is seeking to remind us of our holy commission, which is the *Great Commission*. During the coming days, weeks, months and years, we have to get back to the task of sharing the life-changing power of Yeshua! The US Constitution is an amazing document that guarantees the *rights* of all Americans. However, the Bible is an even more amazing document that says Jesus purchased us and we are His bondservants to do His bidding. He has commanded us to make disciples, preach the Gospel and extend the borders of His kingdom. Yes, as good citizens we should stand for the rights of everyone—but the sharing the Good News of Yeshua must come first.

The best is truly yet to come. Revival! Yes, real New Testament, Book-of-Acts-and-beyond revival is on the horizon. So is persecution. *Think it not strange*, as Peter says, in speaking of suffering for Jesus. Sadly, most are not ready. When Corona came and was immediately followed by racial tensions, our knee-jerk reaction should have been, *how does God want to use this to bring Yeshua to more people?* Most, though, sought to “save their own lives.” According to Luke 9:24, that is how you lose your life. It is the one who embraces the cross and follows Yeshua who finds it. Let me be biblically blunt: Dead people have no rights! We live to serve Him.

This passage in Luke has nothing to do with a *one-time confession* at the front of a congregation or being immersed in water as a baby. Yeshua says, *daily*, we take up our cross—*daily*. “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?” To put it another way: What good is it to win the right to not wear a mask, and never reach your neighbor with the Gospel?

It is a new day, dear friend. You must prepare! I am not speaking about hiding water and lentils. I am talking about getting strong in Yeshua; taking your stand for the gospel, no matter what comes. An Olympian exercises day and night for years so he or she is ready for competition. We must build up our faith. Friends, being forbidden to sing in church in California is nothing compared to the persecution prophesied for the end-times. *Get strong. Get ready.* (To be clear, it is absolutely wrong in my opinion that Governor Newsom sought to ban singing in congregations, while having no criticism for mass protests—my point is that it will get worse!)

I have seen several posts on social media about looking forward to the end of 2020—as if all will go back to normal. Do we really think that these cataclysmic events will end on a fictitious new year? (The real New Year begins in spring according to Scripture.) No, if we are really in the season of birth pangs, we need to prepare.

This is why I wrote *Birth Pangs*: To warn people to get ready, so together we can get equipped. For the one who has embraced the cross and died to himself, the end-times will be exciting. For the one trying to save their life, it will be terrifying. Jesus Himself said “many will turn away from the faith.” I don’t want you to be one of them! Please read this book!

And then, just before going to press ... Ruth Bader Ginsburg dies on the eve of Rosh Hashanah. *Another birth pang!* I had wondered all year, how long the Lord would let her live—not because of her deeds; there is none righteous—but because of the weight her seat on the Supreme Court in the United States. Now, with just a few weeks before the election, there is a vacant seat that the Republicans are sure to seek to fill. I am not speaking about politics. Given the climate of the U.S. political scene, *this could lead to serious violence*. Birth pangs.

As I drove home from my parents on Erev Rosh Hashanah, I felt a brooding sense come all over me. Here is some of what I wrote:

As I was praying tonight, after learning of the passing of RBG, I felt a deep brooding come over me. First, let me say that we should mourn her death. I disagreed with her on many issues, most importantly 'life', but David grieved deeply over the death of King Saul. Politics can wait 24 hours. It is a time to mourn.

Secondly, the darkness I felt was connected to the divisiveness in America and how the enemy could use this to cause more bloodshed. I could almost see the darkness surrounding God's presence and a mixture of sadness, anger and concern in his midst. No, there is no darkness in God, but there are times He will surround himself in darkness:

He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—the dark rain clouds of the sky. (Ps. 18:11)

Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. (Ps. 97:2)

The fact that she died on Erev Rosh Hashanah—biblically, Yom Teruah, The Feast of Trumpets, cannot be ignored. The sound of the Shofar can signify many things, including judgment. The Ten Days of Awe that begin tonight and last through Yom Kippur, are days of repentance.

We live in serious times friends. We have seen several *contractions*, if you will, since 2020 began. There are six types of contractions that a woman goes through in giving birth. The first ones are not serious—Braxton Hicks. We may have missed them completely. But then there are the Early Labor contractions. Things are getting serious, but you are not in labor yet. Next, there are Active Labor contractions—they are closer apart and it signifies that

it is time to get to the place where you plan to give birth.

Transition contractions come when the cervix begins to open. These are the most intense and painful. And then, it is time to push. These are the final contractions that lead to birth. Lastly, there are post birth contractions, like tremors after an earthquake.

Listen, as a male, I feel weird writing about this, but in several places the Bible compares the final years before Yeshua's coming to labor pains. Look where we are: Israel is restored. Jerusalem has been reunited. Millions of Jews have come home (Israel now has more Jews than any other nation). The gospel message could touch every nation shortly. And the world is experiencing intense *birth pangs*.

We must be ready.

Ron Cantor
Erev Yom Kippur, 5781
September 27th, 2020

01.

BE READY

“But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.” (1 Thessalonians 5:4)

Saturday afternoon in Israel: *Shabbat*. There’s nothing quite like it anywhere else in the world. It’s sacred. It’s quiet. It’s a day when I can *not work* and not feel guilty. It was early March and I was sitting on my couch. I asked the Lord, “Is there something you are saying through all this?” “This” was the Coronavirus that was beginning to spread throughout the world. Immediately I heard in my spirit, *“Be ready.”*

I did not need to ask Him what He meant. I have been teaching this for years. I have lived with a deep concern that most believers in the West have no paradigm for what it means to suffer for His name’s sake. They are not ready for the end-times and, what’s more, many do not believe that they will even be here during the Great Tribulation! Now, before you put this book down, as I said in the introduction, there are still several more chapters that can assist you even if you are a hardcore “pre-trib-er”. That is fine. The timing of the rapture should not be a doctrine that divides us! Please, just consider my words. If I’m wrong, then you can tell me when we are raptured to Heaven seven years before the coming of the Lord. If so, I’m okay to imagine that there will be a long line of people at my heavenly mansion telling me, *“I told you so!”* I am okay with that. However, it would be far worse for those who expected to be raptured and were not. They will not be emotionally and spiritually equipped to endure the difficult times and the coming persecution during the Great Tribulation.

Jesus Teaches on the End-times

The most detailed teaching of Yeshua on the End-times is in the *Olivet Discourse* wherein He shares with His disciples on the Mount of Olives about the final years before He returns. Let’s read that through now, as we will be referring back to this passage several times throughout the book. I will quote from Matthew’s version in chapter 24, but the same teaching can be found in Luke 21 and Mark 13.

As Yeshua was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, asking, “Tell us, when will this happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?”

“Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes [and plaguesⁱⁱⁱ] in various places. *All these are the beginning of birth pains.*

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

If I had to give a subtitle to this passage, it would be: “*Prepare! Be ready!*” Yeshua speaks about difficult times and He wants to ensure that His disciples—you and I—will stand firm until the end. He is telling us these things so we will not be caught unaware when these events unfold. What events?

1. Deception
2. False messiahs
3. Wars and rumors of wars
4. Upheaval between nations
5. Earthquakes
6. Famines
7. Plagues or Pestilence
8. Persecution and Martyrdom
9. Believers will be hated

10. A falling away of the saints
11. These former saints will turn on their brothers and sisters and “hate” them
12. False prophets
13. Increase of wickedness
- 14 The love of most will grow cold
15. At the same time, the greatest evangelistic movement the world has ever seen will touch every nation (see v. 14)

A piece of cake, right? Not exactly, which is why He is giving us, His children, a preview. He knows it will be a challenging time and doesn't want us to become a spiritual statistic: He doesn't want us to fall away. COVID-19 is clearly not going to be the last pandemic before the coming of the Lord. We will face many far more challenging things than this, from weather patterns to war. That is why Yeshua wants us to be ready! While some will tell you to store some water, rice and lentils, let's be honest: outside of supernatural help, that will only last a few weeks. (And don't let your neighbors find out, unless you plan to use these goods as an evangelistic tool.) I am not against it, and there is something to be said about preparing as best as you can; but the real miracles happen when there is no other earthly option.

Remember the widow who came to Elisha? She was about to lose everything to creditors. The story is in 2 Kings 4. He tells her to collect jars from all her neighbors and continually fill them up with oil. Supernaturally, the oil doesn't run out until she has all that she needs and is able to sell it and pay off her creditors. There is also the story of the fish and loaves and the account in 2 Kings 7 of the lepers, who went into the enemy camp to surrender, found enough food for all Israel.

These stories are in the Bible for a reason. *God wants to encourage us that He can take care of us, even in the midst of the most difficult of circumstances.* In fact, His power is released to the greatest level when there are no other options but Him. There are numerous stories in the Bible of God coming through at the last minute:

- Yeshua is in the boat with His disciples during a great storm and they thought they were going to die.

- When Elisha was surrounded by hostile armies, God blinded them.
- The woman with the issue of blood had tried everything for a cure and nothing worked until Yeshua healed her.
- A centurion approached Yeshua about his servant who was paralyzed and in great suffering. Yeshua told him to go home to his healed servant.

I believe that in the last days we are going to see an abundance of miracles like this in your life and in mine. Now is the time to develop that overcoming faith in God Almighty. The day will come when you will have to tell a mountain to get up and move and, because there will be absolutely no other way, God will move the mountain for you. (Mark 11:23-24)

That's what I mean by "being ready." It is not necessarily having a supply of water or a generator (not that those things are bad) but developing your faith in God so that you do not lose heart in the most difficult of circumstances.

Remove Every Hindrance

Another thing we must do is to deal with our petty sins—and the not-so-petty ones. They will slow you down.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, *let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles*. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Whatever chronic sins or addictions you have given in to, now is the time to get free. I'm not saying this to condemn you, or as they say today, to "shame" you. I want to encourage you that you can be free. I know this better than anyone, as I have had to overcome many issues in my life as well. There is no shame in the blood of Jesus; just freedom and forgiveness. God can set you free from pornography, alcoholism, as well as the more hidden sins like bitterness, pride, and jealousy that all find their home in the soul of man.

Then there is the *acceptable addiction* that kills 400,000 Americans every year^{iv} (Look at the lengths to which we are fighting COVID-19 deaths and so far

we are at 150,000 in the U.S.) I recently watched a video in which a 400-plus-pound man stood on stage at a megachurch and talked about how he was almost robbed. He kept joking about how the robbers had never encountered a 400-pound man who could move like him. Everyone laughed. I wondered if they would laugh if he had been on the stage drunk on alcohol, or was telling the story while smoking a cigarette and talking about how he was looking at pornography on the Internet the night before. We would be shocked!

We look at food addiction and excuse it, when it is more deadly, according to many scientists, than smoking or alcohol addiction. When my friend, Dr. Michael Brown, decided to get serious about his diet he said that getting off of chocolate was harder than quitting heroin as a teenager!

You may say; *“If you’re right about scarcity, I won’t have to worry about food addiction in the coming days.”* I think you’re missing my point. This is about *being ready*, not waiting for food to run out. God wants to teach us to be disciplined like a soldier. Paul speaks of this clearly:

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Sins and addictions will hold you back, and depending on what the issue is, it can end your life early. Now is the time to “throw off everything that hinders,” so we can run our race with full stamina and anointing.

Fasting

One of the ways that God breaks these things from our lives is through fasting. Fasting cuts off the flesh. When you take a season to starve your flesh in order to feed your spirit, the results can be dramatic. You can be disciplined in several different areas of your life and still be undisciplined in a few crucial ones. In his book, Dr. Brown speaks about being very disciplined and yet he could not break his addiction to food.

Taking time to fast and pray and focusing on the areas where you still need

victory is a great way to find discipline. Fasting is not a formula; it's about connecting to the person of Yeshua in obtaining more of Him to run your race. I'm sure some will say you can't have more Holy Spirit than you already have. Fair enough. But fasting will help you realize how big and powerful the Spirit of God is within you.

Also, if you're dealing with a food addiction, nothing brings the flesh under subjection more than fasting. You are making a statement: Your stomach is not your God. I know this is scary if you've been living this lifestyle for many years, but I also know how you long to be free. Addictions control our lives. Every time we go out, even for just a simple date with your spouse, the addiction screams. It demands to be taken care of! The alcoholic wants to make sure he can get alcohol and the food addict is deeply concerned about his next meal. This can be absolutely exhausting, but we play the game because we feel that we have to "fill in the blank." Yet, if you talk to those who have found freedom, they will tell you how much happier they are.

The Word of God

Now is the time to build your life on the word of God, and not on every prophecy that comes down the pike to tickle our ears. Read God's word and memorize it. The day may come when your Bible is taken away—yes, and even your iPhone and iPad. You will have to rely on the Holy Spirit to bring back to your mind everything that you have ever read. King David wrote, "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11) The more of God's word that you hide in your heart, the more power you will have with it in the day of evil. (Ephesians 6:13)

A Theology for Suffering

Many believers have believed a false teaching that simply does not line up with 2,000 years of history, namely, that you will never or rarely suffer if you are a believer. Even for those who do not embrace this as a teaching, they have become used to the western experience of a life free from suffering.

First of all, if you look at the very first disciples; they suffered greatly for their faith in Yeshua. The original apostles were all beaten with a "cat o' nine tails", or flogged, because they would not stop teaching and preaching about Yeshua. (Acts 5:40) Even when the Bible promises great blessing, it adds the caveat that blessing is in addition to persecution.

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” (Mark 10:29-31)

Yes, we believe in the blessing of God in this life. God loves to bless His children. And He says here that He will reward us for our sacrifice in this life and in the life to come. But He is also very clear that in addition to blessing, there will be persecutions. Paul told Timothy, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Messiah Jesus ***will be persecuted.***” (2 Timothy 3:12)

As Paul was rotting in a Roman jail, instead of complaining about his rights being violated or the fact that he was suffering in a prison cell, he cried out regarding his desire to know Yeshua more. He wrote:

“I want to know Messiah—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and *participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.*” (Philippians 3:10)

In 37 years of being a believer, I have heard many preachers talk about longing for the power of His resurrection, but yet only a handful (if that many) teaching on participating in the sufferings of Jesus in order to become like Him in His death. There is an intimacy with the Messiah that can only be obtained by crawling into the grave with Him. For more on this subject go to www.birth-pangs.com.

Look at everything Paul went through in his efforts to get the gospel to other people. In 2 Corinthians 4, he says that he embraced death so that others could have life. In chapter 11, he lists everything he’s gone through, which included days without food, nights without sleep, being beaten with rods, being flogged and even shipwrecked, just to name a few. This is how we identify with the death of Yeshua in our own lives. We embrace suffering in our efforts to bring other people into the Kingdom.

“We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.” (2 Corinthians 4:11-12)

Dress rehearsal

I will share more on this later, but I do believe this is one of the reasons God has allowed these events, speaking of COVID-19, the racial tensions, and riots to come on planet earth: to wake up His people to the fact that *preparation is needed*. Just imagine that you are an Olympian and you suddenly found out that instead of having a year to prepare, you only had two weeks. What would you do? You would hit the gym, watch your diet and do everything you could do for the next two weeks to get ready. Let's not find ourselves in that situation, but instead begin to prepare now.

Of course, you need to go on living your life—for all we know the Second Coming is another 1,000 years from now. But as I look around me, it does seem that the situation we're in today looks very much like the one to which Jesus referred in Matthew 24. Let's get ready!

Paul picks up on Yeshua's strong exhortation about being ready for the coming birth pangs:

“Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)

Notice he says, “sudden destruction will come on them...” However, we, the sons and daughters of light, are supposed to be ready. It will not catch us unaware. “But Ron, he says He will come like a thief!” Yes, *to the unbeliever or the unprepared believer, but you, he says in the next verse, “are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.” (v. 4)*

The Best is yet to Come

Before I close this chapter, I really want to encourage you: *The best is yet to come!* For those of us who choose to get ready; who choose to embrace a New Testament lifestyle of sharing the gospel and doing the works of Jesus—I truly believe exciting times are ahead. I shared at the beginning of this chapter that I was depressed when I was told that we would be taken out of the equation seven years before Jesus returned. *This is the most exciting time to be alive!* Don't be discouraged because of everything that is happening around you. Now is the time to reach out with the love of God and the power of God. If

you have time, please read my free book, *The Coming End-Time Awakening*; you can get it at our website: www.roncantor.com. It will encourage you about the coming days and it is important to stay encouraged.

Whenever you choose to start working out or to watch your diet, it always helps to watch documentaries and read articles that are designed to keep you from quitting. In this great adventure, we cannot afford to quit because it is *he who stands firm to the end who will be saved*.

02.

DON'T BE ALARMED

*“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.”
(Matthew 24:6)*

Brace yourselves! The days leading up to the Second Coming are a time of chaotic, dreadful events. “People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” (Luke 21:26)

But God has not left us alone. John 14-16 is all about how we now have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Do you understand that awesome privilege? The Holy Spirit is living in you! He will lead you and guide you in the days to come. This is why Jesus says to his disciples (and to you, me, and all those who are alive at His coming!) to not to be alarmed.

The grace of God given to believers through the Holy Spirit will be far greater than what we enjoy today. Today’s grace will get you through today, but as things intensify, so will the power and presence of God in our lives. God will not leave us like orphans; Yeshua made this clear: “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:18) While the context of this verse is about Him preparing a place for us, the principle of it shows God’s nature to protect us.

When my children jumped in the swimming pool for the first time, I had to tell them, “It’s okay—don’t be afraid.” Why? Because it was new territory for them. People drown in water every day. They were right to be a little nervous. I wasn’t saying water is not dangerous for a four-year old; I was saying “Daddy’s here to make sure nothing happens.” The obvious, earthly reaction to everything that is happening today is absolutely to be alarmed! God is saying to us, “I am with you.” Were those not the last words of Yeshua? “And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

I remember the day when we realized that the Coronavirus was a pretty big deal. Elana and I were in Israel’s southernmost city of Eilat after deciding to

take a few days off to recharge our batteries. It was Friday night and we were watching the news in Hebrew. Most Israelis watch the 8:00 pm news on Friday night, even if they have to tape it and watch it after Shabbat dinner. This was late February and they were talking about how the virus was now spreading to other nations. There were just two cases in Israel at the time, and we were all panicking about a Korean tour group that had seemingly brought the disease here.

The picture they were painting was grim. Elana and I just sat there as a demonic spirit of panic came upon us, and we did nothing about it! We went out to dinner *shellshocked*. It felt like the end of the world. *How long before this disease spreads throughout the entire country? How many will die? When will we get this dreadful disease?*

The next morning I said to my wife, “We need to pray and break the spirit of panic over us.” I recognized that what we were feeling was not joy or peace and certainly did not lead to having a sound mind. It was demonic, but after we prayed, we were both at peace.

Panic and the gods

Do you know where the word “panic” comes from? Well, it’s not connected to the word pandemic, although that would be convenient. The pan in pandemic has to do with spreading out, as in panorama. But the pan in panic comes from a demonic god, Pan.

In Matthew 16 we see Yeshua and his disciples heading north from Capernaum, His headquarters. By car, it only takes an hour, but by foot it is a good 12-hour hike. So why would Yeshua take His disciples on such a journey and where were they going?

I’ll share more about this in the last chapter but there’s something about this area you need to know. It was here in the Banias river area that they worshiped Pan, the mythical half-goat half-man-god. Because Arabs cannot pronounce the letter “P”, they changed the name from *Panias* to *Banias*, but it derived its name from the mythical fertility god, Pan. He is often associated with every kind of perversion one can imagine, which is why there was such immorality in the city.

Here’s what I want you to get: from him we get the word *panic*. In Greek mythology, the normally peaceful Pan would awake from his noontime nap

and then give a great shout, causing the flocks to stampede—or *panic*. Yes, we get the word panic from this demonic god.

As believers in Jesus, we have no need to panic. Panicking is not from God. When you panic, you don't think straight and you can make bad decisions. One of the things that amazes me about soldiers in the midst of battle is that they often tell you that in the most trying of situations their training takes over. You train and train for the worst of situations and then when it happens, everything you have learned automatically takes over. It's the one who is not trained and who is not ready (remember chapter one) that panics. We've all seen the movies of a soldier freezing on the battlefield. Things don't normally end well for that person.

And there was nothing to be afraid of! It was just a half-man half-goat screaming, certainly not something you encounter every day, but also something not dangerous. It is like when someone wants to scare you. They hide, and then jump out when you are not expecting it. It is terrifying and no one likes it but, in the end, the fear is not based on reality. We, God's children, have nothing to fear.

Are you scared of the Devil? He's scared of you!

We need to live with the revelation that *the enemy is afraid of us*. Some people are afraid to be home alone at night. Some people still have memories of a horror movie that they saw when they were young, and those memories can bring a sense of terror. Here's a little secret: *the devil and his demons are far more afraid of the Holy Spirit in you than you should be of them!* If you're walking down a dark street in the middle of the night, understand that the demons of hell are terrified of the Jesus in you. This is truth, my friend. Look at how the demons cowered before Yeshua:

In Mark 5, a demon-possessed man sees Yeshua coming. Controlled by the demons, he does something very interesting. *He begins to worship.*

“When he saw Yeshua from a distance, he ran and *fell on his knees* in front of him.” (Mark 5:6)

The Greek word for ‘*fell on his knees*’ is *proskuneó* and it means to bow down in worship. The King James translation says, “he ran and *worshipped* him.” I love this! The demons in this man were terrified of Jesus; to the point that

they betray their master and worship the Son of God! Next, they begged Him not to hurt them.

“He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!’”

I say *them*, in plural, because in the following verses we find out that there was a legion of demons in this man. A legion of soldiers in the Roman army was 3,000 to 6,000 men! So, here is the true imagery: 3,000 to 6,000 demons are bowing down before the Messiah in worship, begging Him not to torture them! The same Jesus of whom they were terrified is living inside of you. Boom!

What do we feel in the presence of God?

There is no panic in the presence of God. Just imagine that you were having an intimate moment with the Lord in prayer or worship. In that moment, are you worried about paying your bills or your job? In the presence of God there is peace and focus. There is absolutely no fear! Nothing that happens on planet Earth catches God by surprise, even if it did catch us by surprise. There’s nothing that you face that God cannot give you grace to deal with. If you’re dealing with fear right now, just imagine you’re in the presence of God with all His holy angels. Imagine He is right there looking after you. Is there any panic in that scene? Of course not. God loves us and will take care of us.

Let’s pray and break the spirit of panic off of your life.

Father, in the name of Yeshua, I break the demonic power of panic off of my life. I choose not to give in to the temptation of fear. Take me into your presence where there is no fear and the spirit of panic cannot survive.

You are in control and I trust you. You have a plan and you will see it through until the end. In the meantime, give me the focus and the courage to continue to shine your light and be found faithful when you come.

03.

GREAT FALLING AWAY

“At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other.” (Matthew 24:10)

Both Matthew and Mark record Jesus warning that in the end-times many will turn away from the faith. That means this could be happening very soon, assuming we are in the beginning of the birth pangs era. The question is, *what could cause so many believers to reject the faith, their salvation in Yeshua, intimacy with God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives?* I believe that this falling away takes place in conjunction with great revival. But something causes many believers to simply reject their faith. *What is it?*

Let’s just suppose for a minute, as we believe Scripture teaches, that the rapture takes place along with the Second Coming at roughly the same time. As Yeshua is coming down from heaven, we meet him in the air and are changed in the twinkling of an eye to return with him to Earth. What about all those millions of believers who had no practical theology of suffering for His name ... those who were taught to believe that they would not be here during the Great Tribulation? Very quickly, they find themselves *not raptured* and not enjoying the angels feeding them grapes as they float on a cloud. Instead they find themselves in the midst of the greatest persecution the Church has ever known.

Maybe they get mad at God. Maybe they shake their fist at Him in anger ... *“This is not what you promised me!”* This is one of the reasons that I do not hold to a pre-tribulation view of the rapture. That is not the main reason—which, theologically, is that I don’t see it in the Bible. But beyond that, if I am wrong and we do get raptured before the Great Tribulation, no one will be happier than me. For all my bluster about wanting to be here during the Great Tribulation, you won’t find me complaining about being in that great cloud of witnesses. Somehow, I’ll figure out how to cope with being in heaven!

However, what if it’s the opposite? What if there are millions of people with a

pre-tribulation view who are certain they will be raptured to the point of not even fellowshiping with people who don't hold to their view (it happens!) and they have not made the necessary emotional and spiritual preparations to deal with the coming tribulation? How will they handle this? Will it simply be an issue of realizing they had a wrong eschatology or will they turn their back on God? My guess is that some will and some won't. One thing we do know is that many, in the midst of the Great Tribulation, will turn their backs on God.

Here's another thought: why is Jesus telling His disciples about this if the disciples of Jesus will no longer be on earth? Notice he says "you" *18 times* in the Matthew 24. Here are just a few:

- "Watch out that no one deceives you." v. 4
- "Therefore keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." v.42
- "See, I have told you ahead of time." v. 25

To whom is He speaking, if not to His body of believers? How can we be missing or already in heaven, and yet he refers to us in the second person 18 times? Or, maybe we *will be here*?

Don't be offended by Yeshua

There's a very powerful verse in Matthew 11.

"When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'

"Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. *Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.*'" (Matthew 11:2-6)

This is a pretty amazing passage. John was the one who prophesied that Jesus was the Messiah, someone for whom he was unworthy to even untie his sandals. He called Him the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. But now he's doubting. While he's rotting in prison, Jesus is healing

the sick, raising the dead and preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. Clearly, John expected something else. Like many others, maybe he did not understand His role as the Lamb of God: to die as a sacrifice, as opposed to the Lion of the tribe of Judah who takes over the world. Maybe he thought that Jesus was going to lead them in a military victory over the Romans.

Jesus sends word back to him about all the great things that are happening and then adds this one last note as a little rebuke: “blessed is anyone who does not stumble or get offended on account of me.” The word that is translated for stumble is *skandalizó* (If nothing else, it’s a pretty cool-sounding word!) and it means “to be put in a snare,” or as the KJV translates it: to be offended.

“Verse six is then a gentle warning, applicable both to John and his disciples: ‘Blessed’ is the one who does not find in Jesus and his ministry an obstacle to belief and therefore rejects him.”

John the Immerser, the greatest prophet other than Jesus, is *offended* by his cousin. Jesus is not doing things the way he expected and the Messiah likens it to being offended—to being “*put in a snare*.” What a great word picture in terms of what really goes on when we get offended. It’s like being put in a noose. It’s often all we can think about. We have difficulty relating to that person. In this case, though, it can be deadly. The Messiah is saying, “I have not come to conform to your idea of what you think I should be, but you’re going to have to conform to the reality of who I am.”

Of course, we would never do that consciously, yet that’s what many have done regarding the end-times. While they would never be so bold as to put it this way, like John, they have a very clear idea of what the end-times should look like—often with charts and graphs. My good friend, Dr. Michael Brown, used to joke that if God Himself ever gets confused, He can always look at one of their charts. But all kidding aside, what if it doesn’t go the way we expected? What if you expected to be rescued from the Great Tribulation and then found yourself living in it? *Would you be angry at God?* It’s easy to say “no,” but I’m sure on the day that John immersed Yeshua in water, he never dreamed that the day would come when he would become ensnared because of Him or offended by the way He carried out His ministry.

Things don’t always go as we plan. I believe that God is good, and I believe in the blessing of heaven in this life. I also know that sometimes things happen, and that if I’m not careful, I can turn in anger against the Lord. Why against Him? Because He controls everything! So I remind myself that I don’t know

the end of the story. We must guard our hearts to make sure we do not get offended at God.

The Goshens of God

Dr. Daniel C. Juster, in his book *Revelation: The Passover Key*, argues that during the Great Tribulation there will be protection for believers. Just as in the exodus, where the children of Israel did not suffer the same fate as the Egyptians, believers will not suffer in the same way as those who pledge their loyalty to the Antichrist. He calls these areas of protection the “Goshens of God,” after the region in Egypt where the Israelites lived under God’s protection.

This is an important caveat because when I say that we will go through the Great Tribulation, I do not mean to say that we will suffer like everyone else during the time of “Jacob’s Trouble” as Jeremiah calls it. (Jeremiah 30:7) I believe that it will be a time of great revival, miracles and evangelism. It’s during this time that 144,000 Jewish evangelists are unleashed on the world. It’s during this time that two witnesses will arise in Jerusalem who are more powerful than the Antichrist and will hold him off from attacking Jerusalem for three and a half years.

It’s also during this time that many believers will be persecuted and give their lives for their testimony of Yeshua.

“I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the Earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.” (Revelation 6:9-11)

Even martyrdom in the Kingdom of God is one of the greatest honors—so, don’t be afraid. God will give you the grace to endure anything thrown your way. Stephen was stoned to death in the book of Acts, and in his final moments, as rocks were smashing into his skull, he is utterly focused on heaven. We don’t find him terrified, but triumphant, even knowing he is about to die. We don’t find him pleading for his life, but praying to see the Lord. The Bible says his face was like that of an angel. He sees Yeshua standing at the right hand of God, welcoming him into the Kingdom. (*I believe that is*

the only standing ovation in the Bible, and it comes from the Messiah Himself. This is how he welcomes those who give their lives for His name.)

So beloved, be encouraged. Even if things don't go according to your end-times prophecy schedule, God is still in control. However, make sure that you do not allow offense against God to enter your heart.

In chapters four and five, I'm going to give you my reasoning for a post-tribulation, pre-wrath rapture. I hope you will consider my case, even if you don't agree. Even if you don't agree with me, please keep reading until the end of this book. There is valuable information which will help you as a guide for the days to come.

04.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE GREAT TRIBULATION OR DO YOU EXPECT TO BE RAPTURED FIRST?

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (Matthew 24:44)

Arrogance is unbecoming, even when you can back it up. But it is particularly ugly when you can't! When it comes to eschatology, the study of the end-times, it is important that we maintain an attitude of humility. No one can be one hundred percent sure they are right. John the Baptist doubted Yeshua (Matthew 11), the disciples expected Him to restore the kingdom to Israel and take over the world (Acts 1:6), and many believers in the first century were quite sure the Lord would return in their lifetimes. Peter says that even prophets didn't fully understand their own prophecies (1 Peter 1:10-11).

As we address the subject of the timing of the rapture, I have no desire to come across as a know-it-all, though I believe I have done my homework. I don't believe that the Bible was written in a way that only scholars could interpret it. The Popes and Bishops of the Middle Ages only allowed a select few to be entrusted with the Scriptures. Even most priests were not allowed to read the Bible but had to get special permission to do so. In Judaism, most rely on the interpretations of the sages and rabbis before them. Yet God wants us to think for ourselves.

I recognize that there are many people who hold to a pre-tribulation view of the rapture who are humble and knowledgeable. I also recognize that my view

is not the only valid view. I only ask that you consider the thoughts presented in this chapter with an open heart.

Rapture

The word *rapture* means to be ‘*caught up*’.

The Greek word from which this term “rapture” is derived appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and is translated as “caught up.” The Latin translation of this verse used the word *rapturo*. The Greek word translates it as *harpazo*, which means to snatch or take away. Elsewhere it is used to describe how the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and brought him to Caesarea (Acts 8:39) and to describe Paul’s experience of being caught up into the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).^{vi}

The Bible clearly teaches that at the end of the age believers will be caught up in the sky to meet Yeshua and spend eternity with Him. Concerning this truth, there is little disagreement among premillennialists. This is the great “blessed hope” hope of the early Church (Titus 2:13), as Yeshua promised that He would return for His bride (John 14:3), like a bridegroom for his betrothed.

The most common passage that refers to believers being “caught up” is 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17:

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Messiah will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

“Thus there can be no doubt that the word is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to indicate the actual removal of people from earth to heaven.”^{vii} That is not the controversy. The controversy is concerning the *timing of the rapture*: When will it happen? There are three basic views for those of us who are pre-millennial (meaning we believe in a rapture *before* a literal 1,000-year millennial reign):

1. **Pre-tribulation:** We are raptured before the Great Tribulation.

2. **Mid-tribulation:** After the first three and a half years of the reign of the antichrist, just as he begins to show his true colors and instigates a massive persecution against the Jews, the Church will be raptured.
3. **Post-tribulation or Pre-wrath:** The wrath of God is poured out on the wicked at the end of the Great Tribulation. Believers go through the Great Tribulation but enjoy God's protection (like Israel in Goshen). Just before God judges the wicked, He removes the righteous (as in the case of Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah) by means of the rapture, whereupon we meet Yeshua in the clouds and return with Him to judge the nations and rule with Him during the Millennium.

The pre-tribulation and post-tribulation views are the most prominent.

For a long time, I was not concerned over which view people held. Minor doctrinal issues should not divide the Body of believers and I still believe that this should not divide us, but I no longer see this as a *minor* issue. I came to the conclusion many years ago that this was not some secondary back-burner issue, but something that believers need to take very seriously. Why?

Suffering

Let us just suppose that view number three, post-tribulation or pre-wrath, is the correct view. As I shared in the preceding chapters, I have concern for those expecting to be raptured before the tribulation, *before* the suffering and persecution begins. We often hear preachers warn believers to be ready to be raptured at any time. Rarely do we hear them warn people to be ready to endure and overcome, even though the Bible emphasizes this several times, including in the passage upon which this book is based: "... the one who stands firm to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:13)

The Church's Response

What is going to happen to all those people, who have been promised they will escape the coming persecution, when they have to choose between the Mark of the Beast and Yeshua? Will they be ready? Will they be willing to suffer for the kingdom?

Yeshua predicted that in the very last days many believers would deny the faith in the face of persecution:

Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. *At that time many will turn away from the faith* and will betray and hate each other...
(Matthew 24:9-10)

The Most Important Question!

When dealing with controversial theology, I have a particular method to help me find the truth: Imagine if you were completely ignorant of either view. Then you were handed a Bible and told, "Study this book and then give us your view of the end-times." Understand that you have not been previously influenced, but are able to view the Bible objectively. I have used this to help me understand God's word on topics such as healing and miracles or speaking in tongues. Now imagine that the subject was the timing of the rapture. *What are the chances that you would come away from your study with the understanding that the Church will be raptured seven years prior to the Second Coming?*

Ask yourself this question: *If you had not been taught the pre-tribulation theory would you have come to that conclusion based on your own study of the Word?* The answer is *probably not*. I've only met one person who claims to have come to this conclusion without being taught it. And I'm not sure I believe him. ;-) How would anyone, who was studying the Bible *uninfluenced*, come to the conclusion of two Second Comings?

Note: The pre-tribulation theory describes the rapture as a "secret Second Coming" of the Lord before the full-blown event of His actual return to rule and reign from Jerusalem. Or alternatively, the Church will suddenly disappear seven years prior to the return of the Lord. ***There is not one explicit place where any Bible writer clearly spells this out.*** At best, you have to connect a lot of fuzzy dots to make your point.

You would have thought that the New Testament writers, and especially John the Revelator, would have made it clear. John clearly portrays the Second Coming in chapter 19, but nowhere does he speak of a sudden catching away of the Church several years earlier. Nowhere does any writer explicitly say that the Church will be raptured seven years prior to the Second Coming. (This explains why this doctrine was non-existent for eighteen hundred years.) So

then, where did the pre-tribulation view come from?

When studying the Scriptures, one of things we should always ask ourselves is, “How did the first believers understand this?” Concerning the rapture, the consistent view of the believers for the first eighteen hundred years after the resurrection of Yeshua was that the rapture and the Second Coming were synchronic: they were basically the same event taking place at the same time. There is no record of any theologian teaching this before the 1800s. Only then was this view popularized by John Nelson Darby. There is much controversy as to where Darby learned of this view.

Paul clearly views the Second Coming and the rapture of believers as *one event*. When speaking of these events he says:

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and our being gathered to him ...” (2 Thessalonians 2:1)

When referring back to these events in verse four he says:

“... for *that day* will not come ...” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

He refers to them as one event, “that day,” as opposed to using the words “those days,” or “those events.” By referring to “the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and our being gathered to him,” as a “day,” reveals that his understanding is that these two events are intertwined and cannot be separated by seven years.

He says, in the same chapter, that there is no rapture until *after* the antichrist is revealed.

“... for that day *will not come* until the rebellion occurs and *the man of lawlessness is revealed*, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3b-4)

The Last Trumpet

There are three key passages that speak very clearly of the rapture and its timing. One of them can be found in 1 Corinthians 15:

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be

changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

This is a clear reference to the rapture. It speaks of us, the believers, being changed—trading in our earthly bodies for a glorious heavenly one. It even gives us the precise timing for the rapture: *At the last trumpet*. I think one would be hard-pressed to prove that the Last Trumpet actually occurs seven years before Yeshua’s return. How anti-climactic would that be?

There are several additional passages that refer to a trumpet announcing the coming of Yeshua. Surely this trumpet cannot be *after* the last trumpet, right? The Olivet Discourse is considered to be the backbone of Bible Prophecy. The synoptic writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke) all allude to it. In it, Yeshua mentions this end-time trumpet in the second of the three passages.

“Immediately after the distress of those days ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels *with a loud trumpet call*, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” (Matthew 24:29-31)

The first thing we notice is that He “gather(s) his elect” *after* “the distress of those days.” The “distress of those days” is a reference to the Great Tribulation. The rapture occurs *after* this.

In addition, it is clear that the writer is referring to *one* event here. Most pre-tribulation teachers believe that the rapture will be *secret*—people will just disappear. Everyone else will be left to try and figure out what happened. This is certainly the scenario put forth in most novels written about the Great Tribulation period. However, Yeshua here says that just *before* the rapture, there will be several visible signs in the sky:

1. Darkened Sun and Moon
2. Stars Falling
3. Yeshua’s sign in the sky
4. Yeshua visibly coming on the clouds

Because of these signs **“all the nations will mourn” (v.30)**. This is not some secret event, but the greatest triumph known to mankind, heralded by the most unimaginable supernatural signs one could imagine. This is the great *Parousia*! This is the second coming of Yeshua the Messiah! If it is a secret event, why are the nations mourning? They are mourning because they recognize that the One whom they have rejected is King over all the earth.

Revelation 1:7, which clearly refers to the Second Coming and uses the same language of the “nations mourning,” coincides with Matthew 24:

“Look, He is coming with the clouds,
and every eye shall see Him,
even those who pierced Him.
“And all the tribes of the earth
shall mourn because of Him.

“Yes, amen!” (Revelation 1:7 TLV)

1. The *nations mourn*, according to Matthew and John, as the elect are gathered—or raptured.
2. And yet, every eye will see Yeshua. How could the rapture be secret if “every eye will see Him”?

Furthermore, if you read the Matthew passage, it does not appear or even hint that His “coming on the clouds of the sky” is separated by seven years from His angels “gathering the elect from the four winds.” It presents them as one event—or at least a series of events happening in quick succession.

The third passage is the one we began with at the beginning of the chapter. This is the most famous passage on the rapture.

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Messiah will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be *caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”
(1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

The problem with this passage for the pre-tribulation view is that it sure seems like it describes the Second Coming of Messiah. *The Lord comes down from heaven*. Why would He need to *come down* in order to rapture us to heaven?

In many of the popular novels and movies on the end-times, the church just disappears. But in Scripture, Yeshua is actively involved in the rapture. Could it be that He comes down because *we are not going to heaven*? What if He is on His way to earth? But before He pours out His wrath, we are taken up and given new, incorruptible bodies. Then, “we will be with the Lord forever,”—but it doesn’t say where! I think we return with Him to rule with Him for 1,000 years.

Also, we see again this trumpet blast. While it doesn’t say the *last trumpet*, like it does in 1 Corinthians 15, it is clearly the same event. All three of these key passages portray the rapture and the Second Coming as two elements of one event, accompanied by a trumpet blast.

A Thief in the Night?

One might say: “Doesn’t the Bible say that He will come like a *thief in the night*? Doesn’t that support the idea that the rapture will be sudden and secret?”

That line of reason comes from 1 Thessalonians 5.

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. *But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.* You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.” (Thessalonians 5:1-5)

This passage says nothing about a secret rapture that will be a mystery to *believers*. Quite the opposite, it says that *the world* will not expect it—and they will not because most of them have pledged allegiance to the antichrist. But when it comes, they will surely know it. It is hard to ignore sudden **“destruction”** that is as **“labor pains on a pregnant woman.”** My wife has had three babies, and each time those labor pains came, it was obvious. Furthermore, Paul makes it clear that for the believers, it will not be a surprise.

“But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.” (1 Thessalonians 5:4)

In summary, going back to Matthew 24, the Olivet discourse, we see that the Second Coming and the rapture are connected and *not separated by seven years*. We know that Yeshua is referring to the rapture in Matthew 24 because he mentions: 1) the angels gathering his elect and 2) the trumpet. This would have to be the trumpet referred to in 1 Corinthians 15, because that is the *last* trumpet. This could not be a later trumpet because there is no later trumpet!

We can be confident that this passage refers to the Second Coming because Yeshua clearly states that: **“They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.”**

Revelation’s Last Trumpet

The last trumpet mentioned in Revelation is in chapter eleven:

“The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and He will reign for ever and ever.’” (Revelation 11:15)

This passage refers to the initiation of God’s wrath being poured out on the wicked, the coming Kingdom of God, and the end of the age:

“The nations were angry; and 1) *your wrath has come*. The time has come for 2) *judging the dead*, and for 3) *rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints* and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:18, emphasis and numbers, mine)

The references to *God’s wrath, judging the dead and rewarding His servants*, coupled with the mention of *His kingdom coming* (v. 15b) put this trumpet right at the end of the tribulation. We will see Yeshua coming in the clouds, the sun and moon will be darkened—then we, the Body of Yeshua, will be raptured and meet Him in clouds and be changed forever! This will happen even as He begins to pour out His wrath on the wicked and judge the nations (as we see in Revelation 19). Then we will return with Him and reign with Him for 1,000 years.

While the pre-tribulation theory teaches that we meet Him in the sky and then return to heaven—the post-tribulation theory teaches that we meet Him in the sky, are changed, and then return with Him, according to Revelation

19 and Zechariah 14:4, to judge the nations and then set up His Messianic kingdom.

The reference in Revelation 11:15 to the trumpet must be the trumpet referred to in 1 Corinthians 15:52, *the last trumpet*. And yet, this last trumpet which *must* be sounded at the rapture, is found here in Revelation at the *end* of the Great Tribulation, not the beginning as the pre-tribulation theory assumes.

Another problem with the idea of a pre-tribulation rapture is the trumpets that start in Revelation 8:2. There are seven trumpet blasts that take place *after* the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.” (Revelation 8:2)

How can the *last* trumpet come *before* these seven? It can’t. Therefore, we must conclude that it is the last of these seven (Revelation 11:15) that signifies the rapture and initiates the Second Coming.

In addition, the seventh and last trumpet of Revelation 11 comes *after* the two witnesses finish their testimony (Revelation 11:1-13). They do not even begin to testify until midway through the tribulation, when the antichrist claims to be God.

One of the Eighteen

Remember when we spoke about the word “*you*” being in Matthew 24? Yeshua is speaking about the Great Tribulation—Jacob’s trouble—and He says *you* 18 times, as if the “*you-people*,” those to whom He is referring, will be here on earth. One of these passages is verses 15-16.

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” (Matthew 24:15-16)

The phrase “abomination that causes desolation” appears four times in Daniel. This is a prophecy with several fulfillments. For instance, Daniel 11:31 seems to clearly point to the attack from the Greek Syrian ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, who sacrificed a pig on the newly-dedicated-to-Zeus altar in the

Jewish Temple. But that happened more than 200 years before Yeshua gave this prophecy. It was already fulfilled.

Clearly, He was pointing to the coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. He alludes to that in the beginning of the chapter, when He says that “not one stone here will be left upon another...” (v. 2). At that time, though, we did not see all the other signs about which He speaks, most significantly, His return as a man of war.

When Daniel mentions this phrase in 9:27, it seems that it takes place in the middle of the last seven—the Great Tribulation.

“[The antichrist] will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up *an abomination that causes desolation*, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

So, in the middle of the Great Tribulation, the antichrist sets up his image in the Temple. We see this in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 as well, when it says, “he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” These seem to be the same event.

And, yet, Yeshua says that you will see it take place. “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation.’” Clearly, the *you-people* are not in heaven, as in that case, the following instructions would be irrelevant. The *you-people* could be us!

Again, I would be happy to be wrong but ready, than to be expecting to be raptured and find myself still here, unprepared. *Be happy to go, but ready and willing to stay!*

05.

THE BODY OF MESSIAH WILL NOT SUFFER WRATH

“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.” (Romans 5:9)

Another main argument used to prove that the rapture will take place before the Great Tribulation is derived from this passage:

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus the Messiah. (1 Thessalonians 5:9)

The premise is that God must remove us from earth before the Great Tribulation because He promised that we would not suffer His wrath.

It is true that God will not pour out His wrath—His anger—on Yeshua’s bride. What godly father-in-law would do such a thing to His son’s bride? He loves the bride of Messiah. Wrath is reserved for His enemies. But the Great Tribulation is *not the wrath of God*. Tribulation means “trial,” whereas wrath means “anger, rage and fury.” The wrath of God, as we just saw in Revelation 11:18, will be poured out on the wicked ***at the end of the Great Tribulation***. What happens in Revelation 11 just before this takes place? The two witnesses are killed and then raised from the dead and leave for heaven. Only then—at the very end of the Great Tribulation is God’s wrath poured out.

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet ...

The nations were angry,
and your wrath has come.

The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets

and your people who revere your name,
 both great and small—
 and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:15, 18)

This is the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Matthew 24:31. There are no more trumpets in the Bible after Revelation 11:15! The wrath here is for God’s enemies—those who rejected his gracious offer of eternal life through Yeshua. Believers inherit eternal life, but unbelievers suffer His wrath.

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”
 (John 3:36 TLV)

Paul confirms this:

“Because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.” (Romans 2:5 TLV)

Why would God pour out his wrath on those who are serving Him? Nowhere in Revelation does it ever mention the saints suffering the wrath of God. However, it speaks numerous times about the saints suffering at the hands of God’s enemies and at the hands of the antichrist (Revelation 6:9-11; 7:13-17; 12:11; 13:7-11; 17:6; 20:4).

The same Greek word for wrath (*orgen*) in Revelation 11:18 is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:9. They both state that this “anger, passion (negative), punishment, vengeance” is not for believers but the ‘nations’, presumably, *who do not believe*. There is no contradiction. We do not find God’s wrath being poured out on people in Revelation until the very end. There is a difference between tribulation (trials, difficulties, hardship) and wrath.

The last trumpet will not only signify the rapture, but the beginning of God’s wrath upon His enemies. Yet, there is no indication that the Church will escape the tribulation period and the persecution connected with it. The Bible never promises believers a *tribulation-free* life as some ministers suppose.

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33 NKJ)

Yeshua is telling His disciples how to maintain peace in the midst of tribulation, not how to escape it. In the parable of the sower, believers are not only promised tribulation but persecution as well. Concerning the seed that fell on rocky soil He said:

“[Y]et he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when *tribulation or persecution* arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.” (Matthew 13:21 NKJ)

Yeshua’s example of sleeping on a boat in the midst of a deadly storm is an example to us. He had to go through the storm but maintained peace of mind—and then the Lord came through.

Persecution is not God’s Wrath

We must understand that persecution and trials *are not* tantamount to the wrath of God. It is true that western believers are not used to persecution, but the fact remains that since the time of Yeshua, believers have been called thousands of times to lay down their lives for the Lord. Many have been tortured, ridiculed publicly and stripped naked before their friends and family. Others were fed to lions, as Hebrews 11 says, and even cut in half.

Even now, *before* the Great Tribulation, believers are suffering in China, Syria, Egypt, Nigeria and so many other countries around the globe. Organizers of “Save the Christians,” claim that 40 million believers have been killed for their faith in the 20th century alone! “Each year 105,000 Christians die as martyrs: one new martyr every minute...”^{viii}

There is nothing unbiblical about believers suffering persecution for their faith. The fact that the antichrist will pour out his anger at God upon the Church should not be surprising. The wrath of God poured out during the Great Tribulation is for the wicked, while the Body of believers will suffer the wrath of the antichrist.

“If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they too will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark

of its name.” (Revelation 14:9b-11 NIV 2011)

It is the enemy, not God, who attacks the saints:

“[The Beast] was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation ... If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.” (Revelation 13:7, 10 NIV)

Why do we need patient endurance? Because of Satan’s wrath against the Church. We will not suffer *God’s* wrath, but believers will be persecuted for their faith during the Great Tribulation. Consider Revelation 6:9-11:

“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, *until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.*” (Revelation 6:9-11)

This is why we are exhorted:

“...he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 24:13)

and

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

No, beloved, we will not escape persecution as some teach, but to the ones who trust in the grace of God, the ones who stand firm, Yeshua Himself will reward you with the crown of life!

Don’t worry. The Bible has much to say to encourage those who suffer such a fate. Yeshua said that the Holy Spirit would be with us.

“But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, *for it will not be you*

speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 10:19-22)

The Holy Spirit will be with us, strengthening us to stand. And to those who stand, more grace will be given. The key to receiving the grace is to not back down. My friend told me a story about Florence May Chadwick, known for being the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. However, swimming from Catalina Island to the coast of California proved to be more challenging.

“In 1952, Florence attempted to swim the 26 miles between Catalina Island and the California coastline. As she began, she was flanked by small boats that watched for sharks and were prepared to help her if she got hurt or grew tired. After about 15 hours a thick fog set in. Florence began to doubt her ability, and she told her mother who was in one of the boats that she did not think she could make it. She swam for another hour before asking to be pulled out, unable to see the coastline due to the fog. As she sat in the boat, she found out she had stopped swimming just one mile away from her destination. Two months later, she tried again. The same thick fog set in, but she succeeded in reaching Catalina. She said that she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam. She later swam the Catalina channel on two additional occasions.”^{ix}

The grace came to her only when she envisioned the finish line. We have to be those who keep our eyes on Yeshua—our finish line. We must be like Paul who said, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Messiah Yeshua.” Yeshua embraced martyrdom “for the joy set before him,” and then He was able to “[sit] down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

What About the Plagues?

During the Great Tribulation there will be several staggering plagues that will come upon the earth. It is my opinion that the Body of Messiah will not suffer from these plagues. There are incredible similarities between the plagues of Egypt in the book of Exodus, and the plagues in Revelation. I mentioned Dr.

Daniel C. Juster's book *Revelation: The Passover Key*, in an earlier chapter. He articulately shows this connection. In the case of Egypt, the Israelites were protected from all the plagues. We have no reason to believe that under the New Covenant we will have less protection than those under the Old. In fact, when God protected the Israelites, they did not even have the Mosaic Law and its promises yet. How much more confidence then should we have in light of promises like 2 Peter 1:4:

“[H]e has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (2 Peter 1:4)

Contrary to those who teach that the last days will be merely a time of gloom and doom, I am convinced that the greatest harvest and revival the world has known will come during the Great Tribulation. Yes, we will be persecuted, even murdered, but that will only spur on the revival as the world looks on to see a people who are willing to die for their faith. As I write this book in 2020, great fear has taken hold of the world because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Imagine the level of fear that will take hold of unbelieving humanity during the Great Tribulation! And when they see a fearless people, who “do not love their lives even unto death,” what a testimony that will be to those tempted to follow the antichrist! (Revelation 12:11)

Romans teaches that the veil will be removed from the Jewish people before the coming of Messiah (Romans 11:25-26) which will lead to a harvest among the nations that will even overshadow the book of Acts!

“But if [Israel’s] transgression (meaning, rejection of the Gospel) means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! ... For if [Israel’s] rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:12, 15 NIV 2011)

Will you be Ready?

Once again, I am not writing these things simply to prove a point that I am right about the timing of the rapture. It would not bother me at all to be wrong. The point of all this is my concern that we must be ready to live through the Great Tribulation. Even as there will be a great revival in the last days, there will also be a great apostasy (Matthew 24:10). I am convinced that

it will, in great part, be those who were not ready for persecution who will so quickly deny their King. Their roots will not be deep, and when the heat of the tribulation comes, they may fall away.

Is there any believer in the last hundred years more respected than Corrie Ten Boom? She suffered horribly under the Nazis for rescuing Jews from Hitler. She had some very sobering words for those who believe that we will be raptured out of this world before there is any tribulation.

“In China, the Christians were told, ‘Don’t worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated – raptured.’ Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, sadly, ‘We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first. Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes—to stand and not faint.’

“I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation, but more than sixty percent of the Body of Christ across the world has already entered into the tribulation. There is no way to escape it.

“We are next.

“In America, the churches sing, ‘Let the congregation escape tribulation,’ but in China and Africa the tribulation has already arrived. This last year alone more than two hundred thousand Christians were martyred in Africa. Now things like that never get into the newspapers because they cause bad political relations. But I know. I have been there. We need to think about that when we sit down in our nice houses with our nice clothes to eat our steak dinners. Many, many members of the Body of Christ are being tortured to death at this very moment, yet we continue on as though we are all going to escape the tribulation.”^x

When Stephen was martyred, the Bible said he had the face of an angel. That is grace. God will not leave you alone. I am not seeking to scare you, but to encourage you. Yeshua stood up to honor Stephen, as he stated, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man *standing* at the right hand of God.” The Bible

speaks of Jesus seated at God's right hand. I think this is the only place where He is *standing*—and He does so to honor a martyr. If we prepare ourselves emotionally and spiritually, we will be able to also enter the grace of God like Stephen.

Corrie Ten Boom, in the same letter, shares:

“When I was a little girl, I went to my father and said, ‘Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ.’

“‘Tell me,’ said Father, ‘When you take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?’

“‘No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train.’

“‘That is right,’ my father said, ‘and so it is with God’s strength. Our Father in Heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ.’ He will supply all you need just in time...”

The key is to be ready to leave and to be ready to stay.

06.

DRESS REHEARSAL

*“The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows.”
(Luke 12:47 NIV 2011)*

I believe that one of the reasons that God has allowed Covid-19 to take place is to warn us to get ready. When a boxer trains, he always has on headgear to protect himself. But when he gets into the ring to face his opponent, he has no such protection. The headgear is to give him the ability to simulate a real fight without risking injury. Then he will be ready for his opponent.

While it would be wrong to say that the Coronavirus and race riots are risk-free, they are a far cry from what will come in the end.

“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?’” (Revelation 6:15-17)

The persecution that we see today, as well, is nothing compared to what is coming.

“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.” (Revelation 6:9-11 NIV 2011)

When the governments, both in the U.S. and in Israel (where I live), began to

forbid meetings in large groups, it was not persecution. In Israel, it started by permitting gatherings of up to 5,000 max. Within days it was lower and then down to 200, then 100 and then 50. Finally, they simply said you cannot meet.

Again, this was not persecution. I am sure there were some anti-God leftists in the government rejoicing at the opportunity to oppose faith, but remember...

1. The Trump Administration has been the most pro-evangelical administration possibly ever. It is unthinkable that Trump is seeking to shut down churches.
2. I can tell you that the data is clear—the more you gather, the more you are susceptible to the virus. In Israel, 50% of those who have the virus are Ultra-Orthodox Jews. But they make up less than 10% of the population. They defied the lockdown rules and continued to meet in large groups for synagogues, weddings and funerals. They are now paying the price for all this. It is a fact.
3. God seems to be using this crisis to teach the church worldwide new ways of fellowshiping using technology. Certainly, *Zoom Church* is not as powerful as gathering together, but in the day of real persecution, technology will keep us in fellowship.

Let's look at these points more closely. Donald Trump's policies have been the most pro-evangelical in my lifetime. It is hard to believe that suddenly, overnight, he is going to persecute the people who got him elected and are key to getting him reelected. He is outspoken against the killing of the unborn and has surrounded himself with evangelicals like VP Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. He has an evangelical advisory board made up of major voices in the Christian world such as Franklin Graham, Harry Jackson, Greg Laurie, James Dobson, Robert Jeffress, Robert Morris and other prominent leaders. Certainly, they would not stand by while President Trump shuts down churches.

Secondly, data suggests that houses with lots of folks and large gatherings are a breeding ground for this virus. On March 3rd and 10th, when we were still very much in the dark regarding COVID-19, 61 members of a choir met for practice in Washington state. Of those who attended, 53 got the virus and two died. It is likely that had they canceled practice, those two people would still be alive. (Yes, maybe we will find out later that those who were susceptible to COVID-19 would have gotten it anyway and died; but based on what we

didn't know at the time, it seemed like the better part of wisdom to shut down large gatherings.)

In Israel, there is clear evidence of the connection between large gatherings and infections. Ultra-Orthodox Jews tend to have very large families. In addition, they go to synagogue two or three times a day. They tend to live in very crowded neighborhoods. As noted above, despite making up less than 10% of the Israeli population, they made up 50% of infections during the early days of Corona.

It was not persecution. It was a precaution. It was wisdom. Presidents and prime ministers were dealing with something they never had before.

Some pastors grandstanded, proclaiming that their rights were being violated, vowing to meet despite the ban. It didn't bother them that based on the limited data we had, this virus spreads rapidly in large groups. Based on points one and two above, it just seemed like the better part of wisdom not to gather in large groups. In fact, several pastors who mocked the virus are now dead! One pastor posted online about the "hysteria" surrounding the virus. He wanted to preach at Mardi Gras without taking any precaution vis-à-vis the virus, and soon afterward, he was dead.^{xi}

Bishop Gerald Glenn defied authorities and opened up his church on March 22nd, saying that "God is larger than this dreaded virus." A few weeks later, he died of Coronavirus.^{xii} Of course, God is bigger and more powerful than any virus, and, we are not going to walk in fear. But instead of seeking to prophetically hear what God is saying, many boldly and recklessly mocked the virus. The fact that it is deadly doesn't make me fear the virus, *but rather, it moves me to fear God in a greater way!* I do not fear COVID-19, but I sure do respect it enough to use wisdom, in the same way I respected hurricanes coming through Pensacola (when I lived there) enough to not go to the beach as it was approaching.

Another pastor, Paul Van Noy, of Candlelight Church in Idaho, referred to himself a *no-masker*.^{xiii} He reopened his church in May and did not require people to wear a mask, while making it a point not to shame mask wearers. He saw *not wearing a mask*, even in a crowded church, as "peacefully and biblically resist[ing] ... the Panhandle Health District 'order.'" He has spent two weeks now in the hospital with Coronavirus. As of this writing he is in the Intensive Care Unit. His wife also contracted the virus, as well as several staff members of his church. "At one point they thought I was in a condition

where I could have actually passed away,” said the pastor. Despite almost dying, he stands by his decision.

I do understand that this has been a very delicate and insecure time for many of us and we often do not know who we can trust and who can't. Maybe I am gullible, but I believe doctors care about people and in their field, they know more than me. If I trusted my doctor when he cut me open to remove my appendix, why would I not believe him now? If the vast majority of medical professionals ask me to do something simple that they say will protect others, I am happy to do it. That is not the hill I am going to die on! If I am going to take a bold stand, I would rather it be for the Gospel—for Yeshua!

Now, on to point number three, which is the main point of this chapter. What we have learned through the Coronavirus (what I'm calling a *dress rehearsal for what is to come*) is that with technology we can still be the body of Jesus on Planet Earth. We now have the tools to be in contact with each other, even when we can't physically be together.

I am not claiming here that having a Zoom congregational service is just as intimate as meeting face to face. But friends, it's time we understood that we're not always going to have our cake and eat it, too. The days that are coming will demand sacrifice, not like whiners who were angry that they can't meet in a building. Please forgive me for using such language; I just want you to be ready. It is coming from a good place!

Can you give me permission to preach a little? It's because I love you! I still find it amazing that even though the average believer rarely, if ever, shares his faith with unbelievers, that such a high percentage of Christians are up in arms over not being able to meet together. When are we going to take the Great Commission seriously? There's a reason that we are still on earth after coming to faith. God does not need us in heaven; He needs us on earth to tell other people about eternal life through Yeshua!

It seems, I dare say, somewhat hypocritical to complain about wearing a mask, if you never share Jesus with other people. The Great Commission is not about meeting together, as important as that is; it is about reaching the nations with the life-changing message of Jesus. That is our sacred mandate. Yet we have become quite lazy. We crave for communion together but are terrified to testify. We will object to a mask, but overlook our mission. The book of Revelation does not show the believers protesting their loss of civil liberties (not that such things should be ignored), but giving their lives *unto*

death to testify for Yeshua. This is how they overcame!

“They triumphed over [the accuser]
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the *word of their testimony*;
they did not love their lives so much
as to *shrink from death*.” (Revelation 12:11)

Like Stephen, they testified unto death in exchange for a crown that lasts forever.

Many are broken-hearted that they cannot break bread with other believers, but hardly shed a tear over the condition of the lost. We’ve got one life to live and the only thing that we can bring to heaven are the souls of other people. Understand, dear believer: The day is going to come where if you are caught in a meeting with other believers, you won’t merely be shamed on Facebook. You’ll be arrested and, possibly, killed. ***It’s dress rehearsal time.*** We’ve got to get this right.

This is why Yeshua gave us the prophecy about the end-times: To tip us off when they begin. Why? So we can gird up our loins and get into our battle for the souls of men. These are just the *beginnings* of birth pangs. We complain about covering our faces—something that science seems to say expresses concern and love for those around us. What will we do when sharing our faith is outlawed? That will be the time to defy authority!

Zoom

I was reading a Facebook post from a friend who was lamenting over not meeting together and challenging pastors to disobey the ban. That’s when I responded, feeling as if I had a revelation right there: I saw it very clearly. Now is not the time to rebel, but to observe. We are seeing that we can function without being physically together. God is giving us an opportunity to learn. While it is definitely hypocritical of some state governors to allow protesting but ban meeting for worship, I am still trying to hear *what God is teaching us*. What is *His* strategy?

The time will come in the future when these tools will save our lives and enable us to reach many more people. One of the first things I noticed is that the standards for media dropped considerably. What am I talking about? I work in media. I love media. It has always fascinated me. One thing I have

observed over the years is that as technology progressed, so did the demands for quality.

If you could not film in HD, it would not get aired. Now we're living in the 4K era on the way to 8K, but suddenly we were seeing interviews from all over the world in super poor quality because people could not come to studios. One thing that trumps the demand for high quality is the demand for good content. So, if you are reporting in the middle of the Syrian civil war, producers will sacrifice quality for powerful content.

Suddenly, I was getting invitations to be interviewed from places that would normally demand that I be in a studio. In fact, I found myself in the midst of the *seger*, (Hebrew for "closure") and busier than when I was free to move around. I ordered a green screen for about \$50 and suddenly I had a home studio. I wanted to quickly adapt.

Why am I sharing this? Not because I want to impress you with my knowledge of the media industry, but because we are learning that in the times of great persecution, we can continue to meet together and share the gospel with large numbers of people. We can continue to encourage each other. And we can use the Internet to preach the gospel of Yeshua the Messiah.

Some congregations actually found their attendance going up. Now that might be due to the fact that people who didn't feel like getting into their car and actually driving somewhere decided to tune in. But it also might be the fact that people are feeling very insecure right now. They are realizing that they're not invincible—that a tiny invisible virus can threaten their life. This is why instead of complaining about restrictions, we have been seeking to use the Internet to reach as many people as possible—in Hebrew and in English!

We started making Hebrew videos and posting them on Facebook. Our latest one on the fact that eternal life is more important than immunity from Coronavirus has been viewed more than 16,000 times by Israelis. And we know that most of these people are not believers!

Adapt

Did you know that there is a frog in Alaska that will freeze itself, even to the point of stopping its breathing, in order to survive the winter? A kangaroo rat has adapted itself to the desert temperatures to the point that it does not ever need to drink water. Cuttlefish have the astounding skill to change their color

and texture so they can become one with their surroundings. They sense how much light is being absorbed into their surroundings, then use that data to blend in so that a potential predator doesn't see them.

We call that *adapting*. We see this with companies. I remember in the late 90's when we moved to Ukraine to help with a Messianic Jewish Bible school: I bought a first-generation digital camera. It was the most amazing thing! I could take a one-megapixel picture and then send it to my computer. It was groundbreaking.

The digital camera put the film photography business *out of business*. One-hour photo shops closed down. Some companies adapted and others went under. Everyone said that the fax machine was going to put FedEx out of business. FedEx could get an important document to you overnight. Suddenly, you could do that with a telephone in about two minutes. But FedEx adapted and, 40 years later, they're still in business.

The Church must learn to adapt to new conditions. Our western paradigm is that we meet every week for one to two hours and that is the foundation of our believing experience. But that's not universal. The Chinese church has learned to adapt to persecution. In the midst of intense persecution, evangelicalism in China has grown 10% every year since 1979.^{xiv} The Protestant church in China is largely underground. Pastors have been jailed without a trial. They say that by 2030 China will have the largest representation of the body of Messiah in the world. Yet, they did that in the midst of harassment and oppression. They learned to adapt to the situation in which they found themselves and, by the grace of God, they are prospering at a level of which the American church can only be jealous.

You won't find megachurches in China. They meet secretly, "underground", in house churches. One of my colleagues co-pastors a congregation in Jerusalem, but has also spent a lot of time in China. He says that the Chinese have learned how to communicate under the radar: "It has a lot to do with using the electronic media in very clever ways." Fortunately, the Chinese church today has more freedom than in the past. It's more accurate to say that they are highly monitored and harassed than to say they are severely persecuted. Several decades ago, it was nothing for a pastor to be thrown into jail and even killed. Of course, if you read the news, things are heating up in China and they may end up returning to a more repressive way of dealing with believers... But the Chinese church knows how to adapt.

My colleague told me, “That is definitely a big key in the end-times for the church that is going to be underground—meetings that are quiet, secret, coordinated by phone calls and by code, learning to not be addicted to advertising everything on Facebook, where things can be easily monitored.” We will one day need to learn how to adapt and I believe God has given us a dress rehearsal.

Revival is Coming

I also believe that the greatest outpouring the world has ever seen is on its way. Romans 11:12 and 15 speak of a coming worldwide harvest that is activated when more Jewish people accept the gospel. We have to be ready.

One of the things I loved about Tim LaHaye’s and Jerry Jenkin’s book series, *Left Behind*—despite its preaching a pre-tribulation rapture, was that they showed how the believers adapted to persecution. (In their book, these are people who came to faith during the Great Tribulation). They use technology, private cell phone networks, burner phones, and the Internet. If the series was written today, I’m sure it would include Zoom meetings, private Facebook groups and the dark web. Friends, I can’t help it. *I’m excited about the days ahead*, the coming harvest which is going to lead to the return of our Lord and Messiah, Yeshua.

This is our dress rehearsal: we can work out the kinks and be ready for what’s to come!

07.

MY RIGHTS!

“You are not your own; you were bought at a price.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

When was the last time you read the Declaration of Independence? It’s one of the greatest documents written by man. Close to the top you’ll find this well-known paragraph:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Kunta Kinte

There is no question that God has given certain rights to men. Modern democracies hold sacred the right to freedom of speech, expression and religion. All open societies want a free press. *But slaves do not have rights.* They are property. Most of my peers remember growing up and watching Alex Haley’s *Roots*. It was our first glimpse into the life of not only slaves, but their cruel owners. No one my age can forget the name *Kunta Kinte*, as it is etched in our memories. Even Microsoft Word’s dictation program (that I’m using to write this book) recognized the name and even spelled it right!

He was the character from the novel, based on the author’s real ancestor: an enslaved Gambian man born in 1750 and sold as a slave in America. *Roots* is considered one of the most influential novels of the 20th century. The mini-series of 1977 was one of the most popular in television history and the finale was the third most-watched TV show ever. It made us angry! How could one man think he owns other men? If there was one thing that everyone understood from the story of *Roots*, it was that *slaves had no rights!*

So, here’s the strange dichotomy. As Americans, Israelis, or whatever democracy you may be from, you have certain rights. America is famous for its Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, that guarantee

freedom of speech, religion, the press and peaceful assembly. It secures the right to privacy, the right to bear arms, and so much more. In addition to these 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, others were added: such as ones giving the right to vote to women and abolishing slavery, among many others. However, as believers, *we leave our rights at the cross*. Yeshua has purchased us as His bondservants. We no longer live for ourselves. Paul the Apostle said it perfectly:

“I have been crucified with Messiah and I no longer live, but Messiah lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

That’s the reality. We have laid down our rights in order to serve God. Think of it this way: Yeshua gave everything for you and now He expects you to give everything for Him. The good news is that He really enjoys blessing us. So, even while we have laid down our rights, it doesn’t mean that we are doomed to a life of servitude, wherein there is no enjoyment for us. No, God created you to have relationship with Him and, because He loves you, He wants to bless you—just as any good father loves blessing his children (Luke 11:11-13). However, that blessing is made perfect in your life, when you operate as a servant with no rights.

Giant Red Flag!

The reason I’m writing about this is because I see a giant red flag. Over the past few months while we have had to contend with the coronavirus, I have seen more and more believers *outraged* that their rights are being trampled upon! I heard one pastor, quite famous, espouse *seven different conspiracy theories in the same message* explaining why he would not comply with his city’s ordinance to not gather in large crowds. This was even as evidence was coming in that being in large gatherings was the easiest way to contract the virus, as I shared in the last chapter. Again, in case you’re not understanding what I’m saying, you can’t have seven different conspiracy theories all be true! One or two, *maybe*, but eventually they begin to work against each other.

In his scenario, it was not merely the Chinese, or the media, whom he said were run by the “communists,” or Bill Gates or the World Health Organization, but also the big pharmaceutical companies and the deep state who are out to get President Trump. It is as if he took every conspiracy theory out there and embraced them all. Mind you, the Chinese are not in

bed with the American deep state. The media is definitely not seeking to help the pharmaceutical companies get rich; the communists would just take all the money from the pharmaceutical companies. Also, let's not forget the Illuminati, the evil Zionists and those who want to control the population! In my opinion, he was peddling *fear*, and sadly, people were buying into it—while not taking any precaution against the deadly virus.

Additionally, I heard a pastor brag about threatening to jump over a counter and kick in the teeth of the manager of a popular donut store for asking him to wear a mask. This pastor has some two million followers on Facebook (more on him later). This militant defense of rights is not in the spirit of Yeshua, who set us an example by laying down His life and taking upon Himself our sins. Yes, there is a time for believers to resist unlawful regulations (I was arrested in the late 80's for blocking the entrance to an abortion clinic and I have no regrets.), but not with violence. Remember Peter cutting off the ear of high priest's servant! Yeshua told him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword." (Matthew 26:52)

Preach the Gospel, Preach the Gospel

But what if the conspiracy theory pastor is right? *How should we respond?* Let's start this with the assumption that some or all of the different potential conspiracy theories are not theories at all, but true. Eventually, there will be a one-world government and a mark of the beast.

“And [the beast] was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation ... It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.”
(Revelation 13:7b, 16-17)

What is the response of the Christians in China to the fact that their government conspires against them daily? *Preach the gospel.* Win as many people as possible. What was the response of the apostles to the illegal trial and murder of Yeshua? *Preach the gospel* ... or their response when they were arrested and beaten? It is right here:

“They called the apostles in and *had them flogged* (beaten with cat ‘o nine tails!). Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go.

“The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, ***they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news*** that Jesus is the Messiah.” (Acts 5:40-42)

Is there even one verse where Peter and John are complaining that their rights have been violated? Were the apostles going to the press to express outrage? Surely they had a case! I am not suggesting that we just lie down to be stepped upon. I am suggesting that our response should not be outrage over intrusions, but boldness to broadcast Yeshua.

The apostles wasted no time; they continued to *preach the gospel!* What was Paul’s response to Rome’s persecution of believers? *Preach the gospel.* What is he doing in his prison cell, years later? Is he worried about Emperor Nero? Or his rights? Is he writing politicians to demand release from unlawful imprisonment? No. There was no time for that! He continues to minister through his letters. In Philippians, written from jail, all he can do is talk about his longing to know Yeshua deeper. Can you imagine that? This is a man who had visitations from not only angels, but Yeshua himself. He has seen the third heaven! Yet, he is crying out to know Yeshua more.

Just read his words and hear the cry of his heart:

“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Messiah. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Messiah Jesus my Lord, for whose sake *I have lost all things*. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Messiah and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Messiah—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Messiah—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Messiah Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win

the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Messiah Jesus.”
(Philippians 3:7-14)

He doesn't ask for his congressional representative. He is not worried about being imprisoned. When he is told that people are stirring up trouble for him by preaching the gospel under false pretenses, he says, “But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Messiah is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”
(Philippians 1:18)

“Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Messiah. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.”
(Philippians 1:12-14)

Paul had no problem being in jail, just as long as Yeshua is being preached! His whole life was about Yeshua. This is a far cry from believers complaining that their rights are being violated because they have to wear a mask.

What's worse is that, up until now for the most part, very few peoples' rights have actually been violated. Imagine being thrown into a stinking prison without a trial as opposed to merely being asked to wear a mask. We would look silly in Paul's eyes, who suffered real persecution for the sake of Yeshua's name, and saw it as an honor. Or, in the eyes of Peter and John, who could be seen “rejoicing,” after being flogged, “because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.” (Acts 5:41) *Have you been counted worthy of this honor?*

If Paul were asked to wear a mask, the only thing he would want to know is:
What is the best way to win the most people to Yeshua!

While we are concerned about our rights—some have said, “Wearing a mask is not healthy,” *Paul is willing to die*. Listen to his words to the elders at Ephesus.

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, *I consider my life worth nothing to me*; my only aim is to

finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” (Acts 20:22-24)

God help us! We can go years without leading someone to Jesus and suddenly we are ready to take up arms *over a mask*?

Paul appealed to Caesar, right?

You say, “Wait a minute! Didn’t Paul appeal to Caesar when his rights were violated?” Yes, he did. But why?

“If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the *right* to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!” (Acts 25:11)

Come on, we know Paul ... he was simply trying to get to Rome to preach the gospel. He already said in Acts 20 that his life meant nothing and that it was better to be with Messiah, but he stayed in this life for the sake of the gospel and his disciples.

“For to me, to live is Messiah and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet, what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Messiah, *which is better by far*; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.” (Philippians 1:21-24)

Are these the words of a man concerned about his rights on earth? No! He only stays to bear more fruit for Yeshua.

What were the last words of Yeshua? “*Warn the people about Bill Gates?*” No, and forgive me, I am not trying to be cute here. I’m trying to make an important point. His last words were to *go all over the world and make disciples*.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and

teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
(Matthew 28:19-20)

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”
(Mark 16:15)

I am not saying that we ignore injustices or when people conspire to do evil. (Of course, we will need more evidence than a few Facebook posts.) As believers, I don't see where we are supposed to protest for our rights. We are dead. We belong to Jesus. That does not mean, though, that we are to tolerate injustice for others. We are called to speak up for the rights of those who are mistreated, whether it is racism or the killing of the unborn, taking care of widows and orphans or those who suffer police brutality. When people unjustly blame all police, we need to be those who express gratefulness to those who protect us. We support ministries rescuing children, boys and girls, from human trafficking. But our most sacred call and commission is to reach our fellow man with the message of Yeshua.

One of my best friends, Troy Brewer, rescues girls from sexual slavery. My wife goes to Africa every year to minister to children. Right now, our ministry is taking care of a woman from Cameroon who has been stuck in Israel since the Corona outbreak. She was staying in unbearable conditions. We heard about her and put her in a home with a single mom on a kibbutz with believers. *She is in heaven* and so grateful! It is a double blessing for us because we get to pay the single mom's rent for the room. We love fighting for the rights of those who are mistreated! The church should be the conscience of a nation that fights for the rights of others, but not our own.

Here's one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves: “Do we fight for the rights of others more tenaciously than we fight for our own rights?”

When Corona broke out, we immediately started raising funds for single moms, Holocaust survivors, other elderly foreign workers and those in need. Even as our government failed miserably in looking out for these people, the body in Israel rose up and so did our partners worldwide!

My Rights were Horribly Violated

Maybe you followed the *Shelanu* saga. Here in the Holy Land, we spent the last year working on a cable TV channel called *Shelanu*. We did everything

by the book. When I first met with the cable TV executive and he asked me if we wanted GOD TV to have their own channel in Israel, I said, “I am not interested in an English Channel in a Hebrew-speaking nation, but I would like a Hebrew-speaking channel. Is that possible?” To my surprise, he said that it was not a problem. I was really stunned, as there has never been a messianic Hebrew-speaking channel on Israeli television. It would be somewhat historic.

We then met with the leaders of several Israeli ministries and asked them if they wanted to be involved. It was very important that while GOD TV was sponsoring this channel, it was operated by local Israelis. The station’s general manager and his entire team are Israeli. The board of directors are entirely Israeli except for Ward Simpson, who is the Jewish head of GOD TV. This would be an indigenous Israeli ministry.

The cable company applied for a license from the Cable TV Regulatory Commission and explained to them that we would be broadcasting our faith in Hebrew. It was approved. Again, I was a little surprised, but who am I to question good news? When we finally went on air on Independence Day here in Israel, all hell broke loose against us. I woke up on Sunday morning in early May and saw a hit piece in one of Israel’s largest newspapers against us. We were portrayed as *missionaries*, or outsiders, coming to convert Jews. In Israel, the word missionary is like a four-letter word. It doesn’t conjure up images of people like Mother Teresa. On the contrary, missionaries are thought of as aggressive, intrusive and out to destroy Judaism. It’s not an uncommon occurrence for a local Messianic leader to have his picture plastered all over his neighborhood with the warning that he is a *missionary*.

As I read the article, my heart sank. I’ve lived here for 17 years and one of the things that I’ve worked hard to do is to combat the stereotypes and lies regarding Messianic Jews. We do not want to *convert* Jews, we want to introduce our people to the Jewish Messiah. I am still Jewish, I keep kosher and observe the Sabbath. I love the biblical feasts. I love my nation and my culture. The last thing I want to do is separate my fellow Israelis from their heritage, culture and their God.

The head of the Regulatory Commission, who signed off on our license, came under incredible scrutiny. Orthodox Jewish groups pressured him to *illegally* revoke our license. The Minister of Communications, in dramatic fashion, went to the media and said that there will never be a missionary TV station under his watch. Interestingly enough, *he was gone within a few weeks!*

At this point, the chairman of the Regulatory Commission lied to the media and said that we had deceived him, and not told him that we were going to be broadcasting to Jewish people. One might wonder, if not to Jewish people, to whom would we be broadcasting in the Jewish nation? But we had it in black and white (in our license) that our viewing audience was all Israel. Nowhere did it say that we would only be airing content intended for Christians—as he claimed.

It was slander and we protested. *We demanded our rights as Israelis.* We explained to them in several press releases that we were not foreigners but Israelis and had a valid license. We told them that if we were expected to pay taxes and fight in the army then we should have the right to share our faith. It made international news.

In the end, they revoked our license and told us to apply for a new one. In the meantime, they pressured the cable company to drop us as a client. We always knew this was a possibility. I never actually thought that present-day Israel would tolerate a Messianic Jewish cable channel. Yet we were also banking on the fact that Israel is a democratic nation. Yes, we have freedom of speech and freedom of expression, but the government is also very creative, and they found a legal way to shut us down by getting the cable company to simply drop us.

Now you might notice in italics above that I said, “we demanded our rights.” And you might respond, “Ron, you just spent 2,000-plus words telling us that we have no rights as believers.” And you would be right. So why is it okay for me to demand my rights and yet to tell you that you cannot? Honestly, I don’t care at all about my rights. Even as Paul didn’t care about his rights as a Roman citizen. I only care about one thing in this matter, and that is getting the message of Yeshua to the Jewish people. The only reason we have demanded our rights is to open the door for the gospel.

Israel has freedom of speech, expression, and religion. This was a clear violation. We had very large organizations in the United States waiting for the green light to put incredible pressure on the Israeli government through public petition campaigns to relent. In the end, we did not have peace about going in that direction. We did not want to put Israel in a bad light. We know that 90% of this country couldn’t care less about our station. It was a tiny minority pressuring the government. If we had taken this to court, I am sure we would have won. But it wasn’t merely about our rights; it was about what God wanted.

We were slandered throughout Israel, and even the world, and we could have sued the chairman of the Regulatory Commission. But why? To what end? I can honestly say that I couldn't care less. My name is written in heaven. I'm going to spend eternity with Yeshua, and He doesn't want to listen to me complain about my minor issues as He points to the nail scars in His hands and expresses His concern that people are going to hell. Are you following me?

Just so you know the end of the story, as I said, we knew this was a possibility: that we would be kicked off and we had prepared for that. The entire time that we were on the air, we were building a powerful website that could handle the stream from the TV channel. Amazingly, it was finished the very day we were shut down and, within three hours, we were back up and running at www.shelanu.tv and with our own Facebook page. We took the \$150,000 that the cable company had to return to us and are now investing it in production and promotion.

To be completely honest with you, this could not have turned out better for the Kingdom. At any given time, we probably had 100 or so viewers on the TV station and no way to promote it. Suddenly, we had tens of thousands of dollars of free advertising because of the resistance from the government, and now we can promote every video. We made a video just the other day in Hebrew about how eternal life is more important than being immune to Corona. It's been viewed by thousands of Israelis! We never could have reached that many people with the TV channel.

Protest the Antichrist?

As we close out this chapter, let me just make a final point about "our rights." What are we going to do when the antichrist appears? All the protesting in the world will not stop his evil agenda. It is written, and it will happen. I have heard people say that wearing a mask is just a small step towards getting us ready to take the mark of the beast. If so, what is your plan? Are you going to stop biblical prophecy? We take our stand against the antichrist by keeping our testimony of Yeshua; by bringing people to Yeshua. That is our solemn commission.

We have one primary job and it's not to demand the right to buy and sell without the mark of the beast. It's to preach the gospel. During the coming Great Tribulation our focus will not be on our rights as believers, but on the need to reach more people. Listen to what Jesus tells us to do during this time:

“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences (plagues) in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. *And so you will bear testimony to me.*”
(Luke 21:10-13)

In the midst of all of this, we will not be demanding our civil liberties, or refusing to wear masks, *but bearing testimony to the Lamb of God.*

Now if that scares you, it's okay. You don't have the grace *today* that God is going to give you for what you will face *then*. To be honest, with all my bravado, *I'm scared too*. But I trust that the Lord will give me grace when I need it. If you had told me just a few months ago that I would be attacked in the media by both secular and religious Jews here in Israel, and even from overseas, (and from many well-meaning Christian Zionists) or that my picture would be attached to these negative articles, I would have run away. (Some may think this is why I am okay with wearing a mask— *the people here in Israel who hate me can't identify me* 😊). I was afraid to check my email for fear of another negative hit piece about me. But then something powerful happened! Grace came.

A week after all this began, I was sitting in my car. I had just dropped Elana off at a friend's and was returning home. It was Shabbat morning and I had been under incredible stress all week. I had hardly prayed all that time. I was in crisis mode from the time I woke up until the time I went to sleep. *It was not fun.*

As I sat in my car listening to a worship song, getting ready to exit, the Holy Spirit spoke to me. I felt He wanted me to stay in the car and continue worshipping until the song ended. The minute I did that the Spirit of God came on me in a very gentle, but powerful way and, suddenly, all the stress was gone! The peace that I received in the car that morning lasted throughout the whole ordeal. Suddenly, the negative articles and slanderous statements did not bother me. Something was shielding me from the stress.

It reminded me of the story when Elijah was running for his life. He was out of spiritual gas and Jezebel was hot on his trail. He just wanted to die. God sent the angel of the Lord (many believe, the pre-incarnate Messiah) to him with bread and water. Twice the angel told him to eat and drink. That food

sustained him for 40 days. God says, in James 5:17, that Elijah was a man, like you and me. God knew what I needed, and He only asked one thing of me: to sit still and worship. There is grace for you as well, and you will have it *when you need it*.

But let's not get distracted from the Great Commission. If we fight for our rights, like Paul, it should be with *that* goal in mind.

08.

CONSPIRACIES? NOTHING TO FEAR!

*When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed.
(Mark 13:7)*

It should come as no surprise that eventually we will not be able to buy or sell without the mark of the beast. The day will come when the governments of the world will turn on believers and persecute us. While I do not believe the present encouragement to not gather in large groups is motivated by a desire to shut down the church (except maybe in California, where they have tried to outlaw singing! [there may be some *rocks* out there clearing their throats!]), this is good practice because *that day will surely come!* They will “conspire” against God and His Messiah and no amount of protesting will stop them. These are the final days leading up to the coming of Yeshua. The nations hate God and His Messiah.

“Why do the nations *conspire*, and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed.” (Psalm 2:1-2)

The fact that certain powers conspire against God and His people is neither news, nor is it shocking. It was prophesied long ago. The question is: ***are we ready?***

Too often we fear the raging, conspiring nations more than the One who created them. They are mere pawns on a chess board, while we are the children of the chess Master. *When we fret over the conspiracies of man, we make God very small.* The greatest of all the bad actors to come is not Prince Charles, the WHO (not the band), Bill Gates, Dr. Fauci or even the oft-mentioned secretive *Illuminati*, but it is the antichrist, *and even he is a mere puppet in God's hand.* The greatest of them all *is just a puppet.*

For three and a half years, this powerful man will be unable to touch

Jerusalem as the two witnesses of Revelation 11 who happen to breath fire and “strike the earth with plagues as often as they want,” will hold him back as they proclaim Yeshua from the Old City of Jerusalem (which amazingly is right outside my window!). Only after they are taken to heaven, does he attack the Holy City (Zechariah 14:1-2).

No Armageddon!

One of the biggest misnomers in eschatology is the idea of a battle of Armageddon. No. The battle is in *Jerusalem!* Armageddon, or the valley next to Har (Mount) Megiddo, is where the armies gather and prepare to attack Jerusalem:

“They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to *gather them for the battle* on the great day of God Almighty ... Then they *gathered* the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called ‘Armageddon.’” (Revelation 16:14, 16)

But the actual battle is in Jerusalem!

“A day of the Lord is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.” (Zechariah 14:1-2)

Megiddo is about a 90-minute drive from Jerusalem or, if we are talking boots on the ground, a 24-hour walk. The antichrist’s forces will descend upon Jerusalem in the final hour before Messiah comes. Look at the next two verses in the Zechariah passage.

“Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem ...” (Zechariah 14:3-4)

This begins the Messianic takeover and establishment of the kingdom of Yeshua on earth. It has been planned for millennia. Despite all the plans of man, God will have His way. No one is going to pull the wool over His eyes (not even with 5G cell towers or fake vaccines). Quite the opposite—they are his servants, *whether they know it or not*. During the last seven years before

Yeshua comes back, they will have great difficulty implementing their evil schemes amidst plagues, earthquakes and droughts, whereas believers will enjoy protection from much of it, like the Israelites during the Passover plagues. I believe there will be pockets of Goshens for believers as it is going to be a harrowing time on Planet Earth.

“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences (plagues) in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to Me.” (Luke 21:10-13)

“I pledge my head to heaven”

My concern is not about who is conspiring, *but for those who are not prepared for difficult times, for persecution*. Even now many are prophesying, hoping and praying that we can all go back to normal—normal meaning DOW hitting 30,000 in the stock market, a strong economy and megachurches full with *no one wearing masks*.

But is that what God wants? Do we have His heart? Or, do we just want an easier life? Hey, I am not a hardcore tough guy. When I am in pain, I seek to do whatever I can to stop the pain. I am not looking forward to difficulties. But, *if* we are really in the last days, that is not what is going to happen or maybe only for a season ***until the next ‘birth pang’***. I am far less concerned with someone’s prophetic word or vision ***than I am with the unshakable, 100% accurate, word of God*** which speaks of cataclysmic world events before Yeshua returns: a time of Birth Pangs.

A Wrecking will Bring Down our Sacred Cows

We want our *normal* back. I talked to a megachurch pastor the other day who gets it, but he told me that all his megachurch pastor buddies are saying, “Don’t worry ... *everything will be back to normal soon*.” Maybe, though, God is doing what He said in His Word? Hebrews 12:26-27 tells us that He will shake everything that can be shaken, so that only that which is unshakable will remain. Please read this whole passage, because it reads like an end-time prophecy.

“See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.” (Hebrews 12:25-27)

He is contrasting the Law of Moses that offered judgement, but not *life*, to the covenant of Yeshua, using Egypt and Israel or Sinai and Zion. In verse 18 He says you have not come to the former mountain that offered fierce judgment to anyone who touched it. “The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, ‘I am trembling with fear.’” (v. 21) Your reward is so much better in light of the death and resurrection of Yeshua (vs. 1-4).

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24)

In light of this much better spiritual position, do not “refuse Him who speaks.” He says that our judgment will be worse, in light of the greater light and revelation with which we have been entrusted.

Now, could this “once more I will shake the heavens and the earth” be in the midst of the Great Tribulation? Could it come as the sixth seal is opened?

“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the

rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?’” (Revelation 6:12-17)

In other words, what we are experiencing *now* with Coronavirus, race riots, and anti-government protests in Thailand, Belarus, Russia, the United States, Israel, Lebanon, Spain, Chile, Bolivia, the U.K., Algeria, and scores of other nations, is *nothing compared to what is coming!* This is but a contraction. As we get closer to the birth—the Second Coming—the contractions will become more frequent and more intense.

“The sixth seal contains terrible convulsions that will shake the earth and affect the sun, moon, and stars. A meteor shower will bring destruction, and the earth’s crust will shift. This is not a localized natural disaster but worldwide terror. It will be so terrible that everyone—including the mighty—will realize that these events are “acts of God” in the most horrifyingly real sense of the term. They will realize that this is judgment, and that the end cannot be far off.”^{xv}

God is shaking everything that can be shaken. Now is a good time to reevaluate what is important. Where do you stand? Is your life built on the eternal Rock or on the shifting sands of what this empty world promises? A great shift is coming regardless of our current priorities.

Let It all Come Down!

Are 75-minute cookie-cutter worship services claiming to be charismatic but having no place for the gifts of the Holy Spirit *unshakable*? We will find out. I see a time soon when God is going to bring some of our ministry structures crumbling down. *I do not exempt myself—for God alone knows my heart and motives, my fears and jealousies.* **Let it all come down!**

I imagine that some Christian leaders are panicking over losing their platforms. Beware of those who tell you that the key to stopping the plague is a financial gift to *their ministry* (this is already happening!). Giving is super important, especially in a time of famine or plague, but the people of God have too often been manipulated by millionaire preachers.

I keep seeing, in my spirit, scaffolding and structures that are man-made, and a wrecking ball/earthquake taking them all down. Then something more beautiful arising: the ecclesia, the people of God: something eternal that

cannot be shaken. Could it be that God is not only draining the swamp in politics, but also in ministries? Does not judgment begin with the house of God? (1 Peter 4:17)

As leaders, if our hearts are pure, we should rejoice. Yes, it is scary. Personally, I don't want to lose my platform, whether it be on GOD TV or Facebook, but I choose to put it all on the altar. Let that which is not from heaven burn, so the glorious body of Yeshua may come forth in power! Preachers should not be afraid of this. Do we want God, or do we want our own personal kingdoms? One way or another, all this is going to be burned up in the end. This life is but a vapor. Why hold on to something that is so temporal and fading?

I would love for things to go back to the way they were. My life was good. Our small tour business has lost about \$40,000 so far. We just canceled another tour that was scheduled for this fall. *But at the end of the day, who cares?* I want my eyes fixed on Yeshua! As Keith Green said, *I pledge my head to heaven for the Gospel*. "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you." (Psalm 73:25) He is stripping everything else away. And, yes, it is scary, but I am longing for His glory. My hunger meter is outpacing my fear of the unknown meter. Yeshua does not return to a distracted bride, but one who yearns for Him.

(I wrote those last few paragraphs in tears, holy fear and trembling.)

The Saints will Minister

I absolutely believe in leadership; but leaders are called to "equip the saints for works of ministry," (Ephesians 4:11-14) and to not do all the ministry themselves. My guess is that more non-leadership believers are doing more ministry now than before, because of COVID-19. We need to be Jesus to this world. Sadly, the temptation for many, instead of doing the works of Jesus, is to protest over what we feel is a violation of our civil liberties. Yet still others are rising up and being the hands and feet of Jesus to those who are suffering in the midst of this pandemic. Some ministries have redefined themselves to face the need. They're feeding the poor and clothing the naked. Others are just angry that they have to wear a face mask and can't go to their weekly service. Which one are you?

Contractions Come in Waves

Yeshua calls it the *beginning* of birth pangs (Matthew 24:8). For those of you who have given birth, you don't need me to tell you that birth pains, or pangs, *come in waves*. Among other things, these pains serve to let the mother know that the baby is coming. That tells me two things: First, this will eventually subside, *but not for long*; maybe just long enough for many to be deceived into thinking we have returned to normal. That has already happened here in Israel. We thought that we had beat Coronavirus. After shutting down our entire country for more than a month, we got the daily infection rate down to just seven or eight cases a day. We opened the country back up, got a little lazy, and now we are over 3,000 a day with the country panicking. More pangs will come in the form of what Yeshua said: earthquakes, famines, wars, plagues and, of course, persecution; and publicly, things that fit in that category but are not listed: a general upheaval.

We see these wars and rumors of wars. Look at what is happening inside the United States of America. Overnight, violent protests and riots broke out after the death of George Floyd. I'm not referring to the legitimate peaceful protesting that I would be a part of if I lived in America. God hates racism! I'm talking about the Marxist anarchists seeking to take over the cities of America. I saw a video this morning of a bunch of protesters beating a man senseless in Portland for no reason other than being in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

Look at China going into Hong Kong. When I started writing this book on July 22nd, there was a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Alaska that had people running for their lives in fear of a coming tsunami wave. Fortunately, it never came, but no one will deny that earth and weather patterns are becoming more and more erratic.

Secondly, and more importantly, *the birth pangs end with a birth*. We are getting close to that glorious Millennial Kingdom wherein, as my dear friend who is now with Yeshua, Marc Chopinsky, wrote: *He shall reign over all the earth*. Any mother will tell you that once the baby is born, the birth pangs quickly become a distant memory. So it will be for us: when He appears, the past will melt away.

What do we do?

Instead of focusing on conspiracy theories (even if true) we should:

1) Prepare for what is coming. I don't mean stock up on water, etc. I mean emotionally and spiritually get ready. We must learn to live supernaturally like Elijah did during the drought. That is what Jesus told us:

“Do not be frightened... But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.” (Luke 21:9, 14)

Why does He tell us this? Because people's hearts will fail them. In fact, in Matthew, Yeshua says people will even get angry with God and fall away: ***“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.”*** The birth pain is a sign for us to wake up and get ready. The contraction says to the mother: the baby is coming! We must pray and seek God. We have to find our security in Him, knowing that He has a plan for each one of us. The first part of the Luke 21 quote has to do with worldwide events and the second part has to do with being arrested for our faith. These things are going to happen.

2) Rejoice and get excited! Speaking about the signs of the end-times, Yeshua gives us the vaccine, if you will, for the plague of “panic”:

“When these things begin to take place, *stand up and lift up your heads*, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28)

Let's go after God like never before! Let's not give in to fear but look forward to His coming. For the expectant mother, often the fear of giving birth can be paralyzing. Some women never get pregnant, because their fear is so great. (I am not judging; I can't even imagine what it is like to have a human growing inside of me. Truly, it is one of the great wonders of the world, but I can only envision that along with joy and excitement, there can be much fear and stress.)

Giving birth is messy and painful. Why would a woman allow herself to go through that? **Because of the baby:** to keep her focus on the coming child. Our key to overcoming and to not become a faith casualty but to flourish in the midst of calamity, is to keep our eyes on the prize: the coming millennial Kingdom of Jesus. That is what Paul did, *“I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Messiah Jesus.”* (Philippians 3:14)

Just think, eventually we will be changed and given new, glorified bodies. We will rule and reign with Him 1,000 years! But remember, the Bible says over and over again that it is the one who endures *to the end who will be saved*.

“Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10 TLV)

The Scripture is from Yeshua’s letter to Smyrna, the ancient Turkish city. Yet there is a message in there for all of us. He says they will suffer for 10 days. Many scholars believe that the reference to 10 days is symbolic for *a brief period of time*. But then He tells them to “be faithful, even to the point of death” and the reward is eternal: the crown of life.

Enduring until the end is a theme that we see all throughout the Bible and especially in the book of Revelation. It will be worth it in the end!

“We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed; in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

“Where, O death, is your sting?
Where, O grave, is your victory?’

“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.” (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

Understand, these conspiracies, whether true or not, should not concern you. We must keep ***our eyes on the prize of the coming*** Kingdom of Yeshua!

09.

BE GENEROUS

If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him. (Leviticus 25:35)

If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. (Deuteronomy 15:7-8)

I'm the CEO of a media ministry called Revive Israel/Tikkun International. We give voice to a network of ministries that we refer to as the Tikkun Global Family. Tikkun is the Hebrew word for restoration. We are made up of messianic leaders, congregations and ministries from all over the world, but mostly in Israel and the United States. My job has a lot to do with fund raising. I love to raise funds in order to help finance God's initiatives here in Israel. I want to reach my people with the good news of Yeshua the Messiah, and that takes funding.

However, when the Coronavirus broke out in late February and early March, I saw the financial devastation that would come to many of our supporters and told our team that we were going to cease all fund raising until further notice. I could not imagine asking people who had lost their jobs to send us money.

Instructions from Above

But then, the next day, I woke up and felt like the Lord gave me a different strategy. We would not cease fund raising, but we would only raise funds for the next few months for those in Israel who had been affected by COVID-19. We started a campaign called COVID-18—because 18 is the numerical value in Hebrew for life. It combines the letters *chet* ח and *yod* י. *Yod* has the value of 10 and *chet* of 8. We asked people not to give to death, COVID-19, but to

give to life, 18. Because we knew that people were going through difficulties, we asked for just \$18.

In addition to wanting to be able to help Israelis in their time of need, I also knew if we could get people to give just \$18 that God would see that and bless it. In a kingdom sense, it would be a win/win! When Paul spoke to the Philippians about giving and receiving, he said: “Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.” (Philippians 4:17)

Despite all the horrible excesses we see among those who preach what has been coined the ‘prosperity gospel,’ that God wants *everyone* rich, and *especially* preachers, there is much truth to the idea that when you give sacrificially for the *right* reasons, God will bless you. We have heard from people who gave sacrificially during this campaign to help Israelis in need that God did a miracle for them. I could give you so many testimonies from my own life when giving brought blessing back to us. No, we do not give for the purpose of receiving. We give to be a blessing to others and to be obedient to God. Then God sees our giving heart, and says, “I can trust him or her with finances, because they are more concerned about my Kingdom than their own accumulation of wealth.” And He blesses us.

We have raised about \$120,000 and we have distributed funds to refugees, Holocaust survivors, single mothers, foreign workers who lost their jobs due to the virus, those whose lives have been decimated by losing their businesses, and so many others including the homeless, drug addicts and prostitutes. I can honestly say that despite all the difficulties and hardships that we see around us, this has been an incredibly rewarding time for us. It truly is, “more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

Hoarding is Demonic

The obvious temptation during a time of famine, whether we’re speaking of food or finances, is to hoard—to save up with no intention of sharing with others. You have to look out for yourself! Some might reason, *if I share with others, I might find myself with nothing.*

However, I believe that hoarding is demonic, and it can lead to violence (and worse) in a time of famine and financial need. It is the opposite of the Kingdom: it is greed. I love to watch National Geographic. Whenever I need a break from writing, I go to channel 45 and watch a few minutes of wildlife. As much as I love watching the animals and learning about them, one thing is for

sure. *They're not playing!* I've seen a pack of wolves fight a bear over a carcass. I've seen two lions go at it over a dead gazelle or a deer. We expect that from animals. For the most part, we don't do that as humans ... except when we're fighting for our lives.

In the Kingdom, God is expecting us to be generous, and in order to be generous, we must learn to trust God for supernatural provision. The biblical way to release supernatural provision is through generosity. Reading the Bible and praying alone will not cut it. Sometimes God is looking for action. It's when we give to the needy out of our plenty, and many times out of our own need, that we see supernatural provision.

Scarcity vs Shared, Grateful Abundance

You might be saying yourself, "*But didn't Joseph hoard food for Pharaoh? And didn't that save the people during a time of famine?*" I believe that God used Joseph as a sign to Pharaoh that He was the one true God of all creation. More importantly, though, God was positioning Joseph to be the savior of the Jewish people. Now, I do not believe that hoarding or massive accumulation is God's highest plan. Keep in mind that before we had the full revelation of the New Testament, it was also fine to have more than one wife, and a couple of concubines. So we see that not everything in ancient Israel was God's highest for His people.

Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann has a different theory. He says that Pharaoh lived with a *scarcity mentality*, meaning that out of fear that he would run out, he accumulated. That is the opposite of New Testament faith. He maintains that "biblical faith imagines a second, alternative narrative: shared, grateful abundance."^{xvi}

Brueggemann gives us three preconditions for abundance: **Creation**, **Doxology** and **Sabbath**. If you believe in the Creator, you believe that He has given us the earth to provide for us. If you don't have faith in God's creation, then you are utterly dependent upon yourself, which is the opposite of faith.

Secondly, there is doxology (the oral expression of praise to God), that is the belief that the less you have, the more you are utterly abandoned to the goodness of God, and thus the more likely you are to see miraculous provision. An example of this is the Israelites at the Red Sea. Only God could have saved them—and He did. The one who accumulates cuts off his ability to see supernatural provision.

There is also the principle of Sabbath. It takes faith in God to stop working. Understand that the Sabbath was instituted to an agricultural people where, during harvest time, you did not take breaks. The ancient Israelite not only honored the Sabbath one day a week but also took time off during feasts like Tabernacles. It forced them to trust their Creator. Honoring the Sabbath was an act of incredible faith for the farming community.

Then there is the idea of sharing that abundance. The sharing of your abundance which you have received by faith releases more provision for the future. Yeshua blessed the fish and the loaves, sharing what little abundance they had with 5,000 people. God blessed this act of faith and multiplied the food. It takes faith in God to share during good times; how much more when you, too, are dependent on that which you have?

Imagine if you only had a little bit of food and a multitude of people looking to you for provision. What if that food was designated to take care of your family alone? Would you have the faith to share it? *Yet that is going to be the key to supernatural provision in the end-times.*

If you have a scarcity mentality, you will collect and hoard stuff because you're scared, like Pharaoh, feeling that one day you will need it. That's not unlike many prosperity preachers collecting homes and airplanes when there are desperate needs all over the world. For the believer who *lives a life of abundance*, he has everything he needs at all times, even if he cannot see it. Why? Because he knows that his Father is looking out for him every second of every day. Understand that when I speak of the person with the abundant mindset, I don't mean that he has everything he needs at every moment. I mean that the abundant mindset person understands that everything he needs is in God's storehouse and will be provided for him when he needs it. Therefore, he does not have to hoard, knowing his father will look after him. Those with the abundant mindset, who out of that unseen abundance choose to share with others, will see angels and much more in the coming season.

Now, to be clear, that is not to say that you should be giving all your money away or that you should never save. The Bible has a way of balancing itself out. The same Bible that tells us to serve others and to give freely also tells us to prepare for the future.

“Go to the ant, O sluggard;; consider her ways and be wise.
Without having any chief,
officer, or ruler,

she prepares her bread in summer
and gathers her food in harvest.” (Proverbs 6:6-8)

The Bible encourages a mindset of trusting God for provision and being radically generous to others, even while being responsible.

The one with the abundant mentality understands deep in his or her spirit what Paul meant when he said, “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Messiah Jesus,” to be fact. (Philippians 4:19) We look at verses like the following as fact.

“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Like all of you, I’m still learning to live with an abundant mentality: that God has everything I need. I do remember back in Bible college, over 30 years ago, how God paid off my school bill. I owed the college \$500. I had \$300 that I had earned. But then the Lord spoke to me to give that to one of my roommates who needed it to pay off his bill. *That didn’t seem very smart to me.* I had worked hard for that money. Plus, the school administration was pressuring me to pay my tuition, but I was still \$200 short.

Against all reason this 21-year-old, broke student gave his last \$300 to his roommate. My roommate was stunned. Over the next week, I received funds from four or five different sources which I believe it was a combination of work and gifts. One was a check for my work as a part-time youth pastor which was several weeks overdue. I had forgotten about it. By the end of the week, I added up all the gifts and funds that I had earned and, to my shock, it was *to the dollar what I owed on my school bill.*

Elijah

According to Malachi, God has promised to send Elijah during the end-times. Some think that is referring to being one of the two witnesses while others see a connection to John the Baptist. There is definitely some mystery to the idea of Elijah in the end-times. However, there is no question that we will have to *live like Elijah.*

During Elijah's life, he shut the heavens for three and a half years. During the coming ministry of the two witnesses, they will also have authority to shut the heavens so that it will not rain—yes, maybe he will be one of them. Elijah enjoyed supernatural provision during his time, of both water and food. Anyone who will be alive during these coming trials and tribulations needs to study the life of Elijah.

In 1 Kings 17 Elijah is in need of food and water. Before that, the prophet was getting water from a brook and ravens were bringing him food.

“Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: ‘Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.’

“So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.” (1 Kings 17:2-6)

The Lord sends him to a widow, saying, “I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” (v. 9) I love this about God. He does not live in the realm of *time* like we do. He says to Elijah that he has already instructed the widow to give him food, but the widow has no idea. She does not need to know what God has already programmed her to do.

The prophet approaches her and asks for some bread and water. She doesn't say, “Oh, I've been expecting you!” Instead, she says, (in Ron Cantor paraphrase) “Are you joking? For real? Are you not aware that it hasn't rained, in like, forever!? I've got a little bit of flour and some oil, and I'm going to cook it, eat it, and then starve to death!”

However, Elijah was not dependent on what he could see with his eyes. He understood that God was the God of abundance. Are you hearing me, friend? I don't care what your situation is right now (I care for you, of course!); God has everything you need! Everything! He is not lacking at all. You need to get this revelation. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is *believing without seeing*. That means if you need money to pay your mortgage or to get food for your family, even though you can't see it, God has it. The way to get it is through generosity.

The prophet tells her, “Instead of your plan, which is going to end in a horrible death for you and your son, here is another more promising proposition: Go ahead and make the food as you planned, but first give me some...

“For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.’” (1 Kings 17:14)

Now you might be thinking that this sounds an awful lot like your typical prosperity preacher trying to milk some poor widow out of her life savings so they can buy another jet, all the while promising that God will take care of the widow. But this is quite different. There are no jets or mansions involved. They’re *all* going to die if God does not provide. What Elijah does for this woman is amazing. He gives her an opportunity to move from a *scarcity mentality* to an *abundance mentality*. And he tells her that the way to do it is by sharing!

He is not being selfish, looking out for number one. He knows that if this woman, by faith in God Almighty, takes care of one of God’s prophets in a time of scarcity, it will release God’s supernatural provision in her life, saving her and her son. Do you see that her scarcity mentality said, “*I’ve got just a little and it’s for me and my son*”? But Elijah moved her toward an abundance mentality that said, “*I’ve got everything I need and I can even share it with you*”.

Friend, I hope you understand how powerful this principle is! It could save your life in the end-times, even as it saved the life of the widow and her son.

Third, Third, Third

One of the primary mentors in my life is my colleague, Asher Intrater. In addition to being covenant brothers, he is my primary overseer. Since he started Revive Israel in Jerusalem in 2004, our mentality has been to give away a third of all the funds that God sends us. We use a third for salaries, a third for our own ministry and a third to bless others. Normally, when you do a budget for the year, you have specific amounts, but by faith we have done this in percentages.

In other words, if not enough funds come in for our salary, we don’t take it from the giving fund. We keep giving. Watching him has been a great lesson for me in generosity. I can tell you that while there are always times of evident

blessing and other times when we are challenged, we always have what we need in the end.

10.

PROPHETS GONE WILD

“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 17:6 NKJV)

In this hour, when so many are calling themselves prophets, we need to take a hard look at who the Bible defines as a prophet.

Many of us have been deeply grieved in past months over the recklessness expressed in prophetic ministry. Some appear to have wanted to be the first to proclaim an end to the Coronavirus (and they were all wrong), some have used supposed past prophecies of judgment and revival to build their mailing list (*‘you can only get access to this prophecy if you give me your email address’*) Some, I believe, have been genuinely deceived. Wrong motives lead to premature words, pride and deception.

How can a prophet be deceived? It’s easy:

1. When you depart from the biblical order of how the gift was used in the New Testament.
2. When you focus more on supernatural signs and angelic visitations *than on the written word of God.*
3. When your predisposition is to simply tell people what they want to hear (for whatever reason, from compassion to seeking favor or fear of their response).
4. When you are prone to use the prophetic gift or *supposed prophetic gift* to build personal wealth and fame.

I imagine many of you reading this are thinking, “A true Prophet of God would never do such things!” *I wish you were right.* Unfortunately, we have too many examples, not only in our day, but going all the way back to the Bible. Balaam tried to curse Israel for financial gain. (Maybe you’ve been

taught that Balaam was a warlock, but he sought the God of Israel for supernatural knowledge, not some other entity. [Numbers 22:8-9]) Even Gehazi, the servant of the great Elisha and most likely a prophet in training, ran after Naaman and lied to get an offering. (2 Kings 5:22) We see in Scripture where God allowed prophets to be wrong, where prophets were pressured to give a “positive” word and where prophets chose to give “peace and safety” words in order to stay in favor with the king.

We see in modern times where prophets have used their prophetic gifts to get women to undress in front of them. I was in a church in 1986, where the pastor gave a powerful prophecy to a young woman and then took her on his three-day “prayer retreat.”

In addition, New Testament prophets are *different* from Old Testament prophets. The same Greek word in both the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) and the New Testament is used for prophet; thus, it would be incorrect to think that they are completely different. In essence, they have extremely similar callings with a few unique differences that we will explore. When we depart from the New Testament order then disorder, confusion, and even deception arise. Therefore, I created this outline that we will use for the next few chapters.

By no means have I created the definitive theological word on prophets, and much of what I post here is what I have gleaned from mentors. Even as I was writing this, I sought input from respected leaders. I feel the Lord wants more order brought to the area of prophecy, particularly when it is on a national or international level.

We have become flippant in the prophetic community, willing to attach God’s name to words that turn out to be false and then we never address it; all while building our platforms and signing up new subscribers. The problem is that so many think of themselves as prophets, and that they can do whatever they want to do, whenever they want to do it, without any accountability or even consultation with other leaders. New Testament prophets were never meant to operate apart from the *apostolic team*. Facebook and Zoom have allowed many so-called prophetic voices to become like the Israelites in Judges who, in the absence of government, did what was right in their own eyes.

When you choose not to submit major words that have national implications (like the end of coronavirus) to other leaders, you increase the likelihood of being wrong or even deceived. Dr. Daniel C. Juster wrote:

“I have observed again and again that prophets have an accuracy when they submit to a five-fold ministry team under apostolic oversight. But when they rebel against this, their prophetic words tend to be off.”

How can this be? Keep reading.

1. The Difference between Old and New Testament Prophets

Team

We do not see national and international prophets *that function apart from apostolic teams* in the New Testament. Acts 13 was a gathering of leaders in which God spoke prophetically, followed by the same in Acts 15. Acts 11 speaks of Agabus prophesying about a famine, but they were a *team* sent from Jerusalem to Antioch. The word about a famine was processed with other apostolic leaders, and a fund was created to help the people who would be in need.

But what if he had been wrong? What if people had made plans based on an erroneous word? I know of a famous so-called prophet who gave a cataclysmic word about what was coming to California. People sold homes and moved. The earthquake never came. The “prophet” never repented.

This is why prophecy given on a national level is so dangerous ***if it is out of order***. If Agabus had been wrong on some level, his peer associates and overseers would have picked up on it and corrected him in a loving way. There is no such thing as an unaccountable minister in the book of Acts.

In the Old Testament, the prophet had tremendous authority as the voice of God. In the New Testament, Yeshua gave the body five leadership gifts which work *together* to equip the people of God.

Not as Prominent and Exclusive

The word *prophet* occurs 30 times in Acts. 25 times it refers to the Old Testament Hebrew prophets and their writings. Only four times does it refer to New Testament prophets. This leads me to believe that New Testament prophets are different from the Old Testament prophets and do not function in *exactly* the same way. Here are some examples.

- The prophetic bar is not set at 100% accuracy, as it was in Deuteronomy. There is no stoning for a wrong prophecy; if there were, we would have a lot of dead prophets, or *would-be prophets*, on our hands! Paul was not encouraging the Corinthians to risk their lives when he said: “*For you can all prophesy*” (1 Cor. 14:31).

(I want to be very clear. Our goal is 100% accuracy and we should not settle for less. But as young believers learn to hear the voice of God and prophesy, they will make mistakes. That is one reason why you don't make a novice an elder or put a young believer in front of an audience to prophecy. Your gift is proven over time. A young evangelist starts out with one-on-one sharing; not in front of stadiums.)

- New Testament prophets do not write Scripture.
- They are not isolated like Elijah and others, but walk in covenant relationship with other members of their apostolic team.
- All prophecy is submitted to the written Word.
- Prophecy from modern prophets must not contradict end-time prophecy in the Word of God.
- Prophecy should be judged by other leaders before being released to a wider audience.

“Two or three prophets should speak, and the others ***should weigh carefully*** what is said ... The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.” (1 Corinthians 14:29, 32)

Paul was not advocating the *Wild Wild West* version of prophecy that we often see today when prophets release words over nations with little counsel and often no accountability. Rather, prophetic utterances were subject to being checked by other prophets and apostles for both accuracy and orthodoxy. Again, ACCURACY and ORTHODOXY (meaning, *lining up with Scripture*).

I think it is safe to say that New Testament believers receive a massive upgrade in their ability to hear from God through the Spirit, as opposed to Old Covenant believers and, therefore, they are not so dependent on the prophet to hear from God. The body of Messiah *is* a prophetic people.

2. Prophets need even more humility

Moses was a prophet, but he told God, “Send someone else.” Jeremiah didn’t want to prophesy either. *Eager prophets* open themselves up to deception. Moses was qualified only after 40 years of hardship and was the meekest, most humble man on earth. I saw a young prophet who uses the hashtag “#propheticmafia”. That may be cool and trendy, but for me, it makes a mockery of the prophetic—especially considering that there are few things more evil and corrupt than the mafia (I know from experience!). It lacks the sacredness that God’s prophetic word deserves.

Because the prophetic gift is so spectacular, it requires more humility than the other ascension gifts (Ephesians 4:11). One has been entrusted with something powerful and attractive but which comes with many temptations. We have all heard of prophets falling into sexual sin, sometimes even using their gift to open that door. As sick and sad as it may be, prophetic people have actually manipulated their gift for sex, to get money, or even worse, by using the name of the Lord and the gift of the Lord in vain.

Sadly, sometimes prophetic people think the people are coming for them, when really it is hunger for the Lord and they just happen to have a gift. In a one-on-one situation, weak people will do almost anything that a “prophet” asks them. The “prophet” thinks the romantic attraction is mutual when, in fact, the only reason the person gives in is because of the prophetic gift.

The prophetic gift is attractive, as are all authoritative gifts. People are drawn to them. Jezebels (leadership killers) will hone in and seek to destroy the prophet. They don’t always know that this is their goal. Often, they are attracted to the prophet and are simply used to getting what they want. On my first day in ministry, an attractive woman came up to me after my message to tell me how good it was and to plant the seed that I wasn’t like the other pastors in that congregation. I was different, *more anointed*. Fortunately, I knew this woman and her reputation and did not receive what she said.

Later that week, she called me in the middle of the night to tell me that her husband was trying to beat her up, and that she was barricaded in her bedroom. Did I mention that her husband was massive!? I told her to call the police. It turned out that while she was “barricaded in her bedroom,” her husband was downstairs in the basement and had no idea what was going on. Pure manipulation.

Another time, I was in our weekly meeting when, for some reason, my eyes caught that of a woman across the room. She was married, as I was. I can't tell you how I knew it, but I knew without a doubt that she was available to me. Years later, I found out after her divorce that she had committed multiple adulteries.

This gift can take someone from obscurity to stardom overnight. Not many should want to be a prophet but, if you are, make certain that you maintain your heart for God and are under authority, working in a team with other leaders.

A true prophet carries God's heart. Jeremiah was broken and in tears. Tears are a mark of a genuine prophet: not trying to prove that they are right or merely using their gift to *build their platform*. There are way too many happy "prophets." A true prophet lives with the burden of the Lord. A mentor of mine shared of being up all night praying for his congregation not to fall apart during a crisis, as if he was praying for the life of his daughter. At times he didn't know if he was praying for his actual daughter not to die or the congregation.

"Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people."
(Jeremiah 9:1)

Another so-called prophet told me how he had prophesied a tornado and it came to pass. Several people died. He seemed excited that he had gotten things right. I said to him, "You *do* realize people died, right?" A true prophet would fight with God to hold back judgment, as Moses did when he told God to blot him out of His book if He chose to judge Israel.

"But now, please forgive [Israel's] sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." (Exodus 32:32)

That is a prophet!

Let me be clear, I am not saying that prophets can't be happy and enjoy life. I am saying that if all they do is give words of knowledge to people and wow people with their prophetic gift, then they are not fivefold ministry gift New Testament prophets. That doesn't mean they're not gifted or anointed: just not a prophet.

11.

PROPHETS GONE WILD PART 2

3. Prophecy is not like a Horoscope

Where do we see words in the New Testament that say a certain year is the year of “fill in the blank”? The year 2020 is based on the Gregorian Calendar, not the Biblical one, and even the Jewish New Year that people like to use is *actually the half year*. Rosh Hashana (in the fall) is the first day of the *seventh* month, not of the first month. The rabbis turned Yom Hateruah (The Day of Blasting of Trumpets) into a new year, most likely to coincide with the Babylonian new year, when the Jewish people were captives there (see quote below). They claim that it is the anniversary of creation, but there is no scholarly evidence to suggest this.

The actual Jewish or Hebrew New Year is in the spring, on the first of Nissan, two weeks before Passover. “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months.” (Exodus 12:2) Interestingly, I see no prophets giving words connected to this day, the actual new year.

Here is the greater point: We do not see prophets in the Old or New Testament giving words connected to new years or new months. This is a modern charismatic phenomenon. *Yes, biblical prophets* may say by *this* date, *this* will happen (Yeshua does this regarding the fig tree blossoming in Matthew 24:32), but they do not give broad generalized prophecies saying, “This is the year of “fill in the blank.””

How foolish (or not, as there is little shame in the prophetic movement when it comes to false words) should one “prophet” feel who said, while sitting in his car in the church parking lot in January 2020 and *even as the Coronavirus was secretly making its way to America*, that 2020 was going to be a year of “accumulation.” What is even more amazing is that this video is still online, even after a world-wide pandemic that has claimed close to one million lives, where people lost their life savings, where many businesses have gone out of business, and race riots have brought havoc to America.

I am not saying that God cannot say, “I am going to do ‘fill in the blank’ this year,” but I am saying that no prophet in the Bible had the habit of getting a fresh word for each new year.

One of the reasons I don’t believe in horoscopes is because there are more than 12 types of people on earth. They live in different regions and go through different life struggles. What God may be saying to those in Papua, New Guinea could be different from what He may be saying to those in Nigeria. Each person in any given area is unique. We have seven billion unique individuals on earth, but we want one “word” for all of them in 2020? The same year that might be someone’s year of breakthrough could be another’s year of sorrow.

Others see prophecy in the numbers. I believe that numbers can be significant. However, using Gematria to make predictions is *nowhere in the Bible!* Gematria is using numbers with Hebrew letters to make predictions. It is an alphanumeric code of assigning a numerical value to a name, word or phrase based on its letters. It can also be the opposite: taking the numerical value, such as in the year 5780, and using the letters to find meaning.

This is not biblical in my understanding. People said that 5780 would be the decade of the prophet. Why? Because 80 (as in 5780) is the letter PEH, which means mouth. They said this based on Gematria, while missing the actual prophetic word that God may have been speaking: *that this would be the year of a worldwide shaking.*

The brilliant theologian Mark Chironna issued this warning just a few days ago:

“The abuse of Gematria within popular Christian circles has now become ‘acceptable’ as ‘revelation.’ Pseudo-spirituality, and pseudo-theology is alive and well and those who embrace it languish, forsaking the love of the truth.”

Bible Code researching seems to have replaced the prophetic word! Not long ago I heard someone say that because Peh פ is the middle letter in the Hebrew word for healing, God would heal Coronavirus by using our Peh, mouth. But Peh is the middle letter for hundreds of words (like number, story, search, book, judge, haircut, etc.). This is mumbo-jumbo, ear-tickling nonsense. It is not New Testament prophecy according to the teachings of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14. Yes, God can use a prophetic wordplay, such as when the

angel told Joseph to name Yeshua, “salvation,” (Yeshua means salvation) because he would “*save* His people from their sins,” (Matthew 1) but that was in the midst of an angelic visitation—not Joseph up late at night at his computer looking for Bible codes. (Yes, there are websites that can assist you in finding out the numeric value in Hebrew of any word or phrase.)

If you want a promise for healing, you can find dozens of them in the clear, written word. We do not need a Bible code for that! An alphabet soup code to prophecy is not biblical prophetic ministry. Prophets hear the voice of God, they dream dreams and see visions—they sense things. They do not spend hours looking for number patterns or Bible codes to predict the future.

Some people (normally not Jewish believers) have become obsessed with Jewish holidays and Hebrew months in their search for prophetic information. One woman shared how the different Hebrew months correlate with different blessings ... except, they don't. The two months she referred to, Sivan and Iyar, *are not even mentioned in the Bible*. When the Jews returned from Babylon, much had changed compared with the way Judaism was practiced before.

“For one, the names of the months that we use to this very day are the *Babylonian names*. Tishrei for example, (the seventh month in the Bible) is a Babylonian month the name of which is derived from the Akkadian word *tishritu*, or *beginning*.

“In addition, the Babylonians took their New Year's Day celebrations very seriously. They called the holiday Akitu (from the Sumerian word for *barley*) and Resh Shattim, the Akkadian equivalent of the Hebrew Rosh Hashanah. This was celebrated twice a year, at the beginning of Tishrei and the beginning of Nisan, and lasted for 12 days.”^{xvii}

Before this, most months were simply referred to by numbers, just like the days of the week in Hebrew. The first day is Sunday and the seventh month became Tishrei. So we have pseudo-prophets telling us the significance of a word that came from Babylon! Believer, please be discerning!

4. Issachar—Signs of the Times

A big part of prophecy is being an *Issacharian*. The sons of Issachar were able to read the signs of the times (not to be confused with what we were concerned about in number three). I believe this book is Issacharian. A

student of Scripture would immediately go to Matthew 24 and Luke 21 in the midst of this plague where Yeshua speaks about end-time plagues. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for not being able to ***read the signs of the times***. So many are prophesying about America returning quickly to prosperity, but not turning to the Scriptures to see what God might have already said prophetically through COVID-19. Maybe God is preparing us for something?

Being Issacharian is being able to see that Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death may have more of an impact on deeper civil unrest—even *pockets* (not nation-encompassing) of a coming civil war—than merely replacing her on the Supreme court, as important that it is. The Issacharian looks at the sky at night and knows what the weather will be like in the morning—in the spirit, that is.

Joe Mattera writes regarding the prophet:

“[P]rophets have *an understanding of the times in which they live* (1 Chronicles 12:32). Through both natural knowledge (from reading newspapers, books, and interaction with high-level societal leaders) and spiritual knowledge (when in prayer or fellowship with God) they are able to take the natural knowledge they have assimilated and present it with clarity, divine accuracy and power! Thus, prophets not only read the Bible but also keep up with current events so they can apply the Word to contemporary situations.”^{xviii}

Many people have their opinions of surgical masks, systemic racism, Bill Gates and so on ... *but have they stood in the council of the Lord?* A true prophet is able to cut through the opinions of men and feel the heart of God. The prophet knows things and does not know why he knows them; he just knows that they are connected to the mind of the Spirit. The prophet looks at a situation and is able to cut through all the red tape and bureaucracy and, *in the spirit*, get to the heart of the matter. Then he is called to bring it to the church.

Sadly, it is rarely a popular message and he is often rejected for it. That is one reason why unhealed individuals, those who are not whole in their soul, make dangerous prophets. They can take things personally and veer off into human emotion as they prophesy or seek to bring the word of the Lord. It becomes a mixture of a true prophetic word and human emotion or anger. The prophet has to take all his or her rejection to the cross—to the One who was rejected

to the point of death because of our sin. A true prophet finds his identity in the persecuted Savior, and in that he can rejoice. He is counted worthy to not only stand in the company of prophets who have gone before him, but in the presence of the Savior Himself, who was also rejected. In that he finds joy, not depression.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us ...” (Hebrews 12:1)

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, *for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*” (Matthew 5:11-12)

I listened to a five-hour session of so-called prophets, a few weeks after the Coronavirus outbreak. All of them except two, one of whom is a close friend and a true prophetess, were focused on *when this will end* and that *America is headed quickly back into prosperity*. Only one mentioned Matthew 24 and nearly every prophecy was positive.

“This thing will turn around in the next few weeks,” “our economy is going to be stronger than ever,” “the tide is turning,” “Invest in the stock market.”

One of the senior men even said that he prophesied at the beginning of 2020 that this was *the decade of the prophet!* Really? I am sorry, I truly am, because I love this man and have learned from him, but this is like the blind leading the blind. Could he hear himself? *This is the decade of the prophet and not one of them saw this plague coming?* There are a million people dead worldwide and nearly 200,000 just in the US.

(I understand that there is a lot of controversy as to how and why people have died, and the number may be lower. While Coronavirus has killed many, it seems to have sped up the deaths of those who were already dying or who had pre-existing conditions. There is so much we still do not know.

More and more evidence is coming out to suggest that COVID-19 is not as deadly as we thought. “A CDC update ... says individuals are more likely to survive the coronavirus after contracting it. The health agency says if you have

the virus between the ages of 0 to 70, you have a 99% survival rate. And if you're over 70, the survival rate is nearly 95%.”^{xix})

Not only did they not see this coming, *they are celebrating their prophetic instincts*. “Tone-deaf” is the word that came to me. If a doctor were as accurate as many modern day “prophets”, he would be sued for malpractice.

“We’ve got to be the voice of God to the nation,” one said. “The day is coming when nations are going to look to the prophets for the answer.” I agree, but where are the prophets? The role of the prophet is to hear the Lord *before* the plague.

“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)

Instead of celebrating the decade of the prophet, maybe they could have been on their faces repenting, asking God why they did not see it coming. The leader of the Zoom call ended by saying that God told him to invest in the stock market. “He told me now is the season to invest. Now’s the season to buy ... when everybody’s selling everything.” Yes, he claimed that the Holy Spirit (who must think we are not that bright) told him that the time to invest is when the stock market is low. I kid you not! (I had an hour-long conversation with this unnamed leader afterwards and shared my concerns. We had a nice talk, but I did not sense any change.)

To date, I have not heard one of these self-proclaimed prophets talk about the incredible opportunity we have as a church to serve the unsaved, to deliver food to the elderly, to feed the homeless, to provide for single mothers. As my dear friend used to say to me in Bible school 35 years ago, “You want a word from the Lord? Here, I have a whole book of ‘em!” Here is one:

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: *to look after orphans and widows in their distress* and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:27)

This is what I mean about reading the signs of the times. Sometimes preachers resemble cartoon characters or wrestling personalities more than they do men and women of God. They’re not living in the same world as the rest of us, but in a *gospel bubble*. Do they not know that the end-time prophecies speak of earthquakes, famine and plagues; not record-breaking economies? Do they not know that end-times prophecy does not revolve around America?

Nowhere does God promise us a 30,000-point stock market.

The church should not be so much concerned about when and how this virus will end (though we would like it to end), *but rather how we can be Yesbua to the lost souls in these desperate times*. People are outraged over having to wear a surgical mask, but hardly shed a tear over the condition of the lost. We don't need a prophetic word to know that we are to preach the gospel! In Wuhan province, they are preaching the gospel! Watch!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XG-EG1oe1Dk&feature=youtu.be>

These are the true prophets sharing the *testimony of Jesus* (Revelation 19:10). Instead of saying that God no longer judges, they are preaching that judgment has come so you can turn to God and be forgiven. Some of these preachers have already been arrested:

“Unfortunately, even at a time such as this, the Chinese Communist Party cannot put aside their anti-Christian ideology, and we have been informed that some of the teams of believers who were preaching on the streets have been arrested and their supplies confiscated.”
(Asia Harvest)

This tweet shows how Chinese believers are sharing the gospel via loudspeaker from their balconies! Hallelujah!

<https://twitter.com/Frfrancisliu/status/1221660148998885377>

Translated it says, “Christians in Wuhan spread the gospel in various ways to bring hope to the people in the epidemic area. Thank God for them and bless them!”

It did not surprise me at all that the thumbnail for the five-hour video of “prophets” *was a call to give*, not to the poor, sick or hurting in this hour, not to people who have lost their jobs, or worse, their homes or businesses’ because of Coronavirus, *but to give money to the host prophet*.

Tone-deaf prophets!!!

“I don’t think we will ever have anything like this happen again (the quarantine) to this degree,” said one “prophet”. *And, yet, Jesus says the last days will be marked by plagues*. God help us.

Prophets are able to divinely understand the redemptive purposes for the events that affect nations and even the world. That is why so many of these so-called prophets are suspect. Not only did they not see Coronavirus coming, but immediately felt qualified to tell us when it will end. And they were all wrong. Instead of prophesying that a major racial earthquake was a month away, they told us, *it is all going to be okay soon*. A true prophet's main focus would be explaining *how God is using this crisis*, or *what His goal is in the midst of the challenges facing our country and the world*. I have heard none of this, and I've watched a lot of videos over the past few months.

5. New Testament Prophets Expose Sin and Wrong Motives

There is no question in my mind that Paul was a prophet, as was Peter. While Agabus and Silas were the only named prophets in the Book of Acts, we can see some of the apostles acting as prophets. Before Paul was an apostle, he was with a gathering of "prophets and teachers" (Acts 13:1). I think he was one of those prophets.

When Paul encountered Elymas the sorcerer, he exposed his sin and his evil motives.

"Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 'You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.'" (Acts 13:9-11)

We see a similar thing with Simon, the sorcerer. However, there is one big difference. ***He was a believer, having been baptized by Philip.*** He would not be the first believer who wanted to use the Holy Spirit to make a dime. See how the Lord deals with him, as Peter exposes his sin and his motives.

"May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because *your heart is not right before God*. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that He may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. *For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.*" (Acts 8:20-23)

As a prophet, he was able to see in his heart. Now, let's be clear: sinful,

judgmental attitudes can often be mistaken for the Holy Spirit. Jesus forbade us to judge others' motives. The only exception is when God reveals someone's sin or motives *prophetically*.

Also, God is incredibly merciful and long-suffering. I don't think He takes any joy in exposing people in public but gives incredible amounts of time for us to repent. Any prophet who enjoys exposing people in public is an immature prophet, if he's a prophet at all. Paul shows how prophecy can expose sin and be redemptive in the process.

“But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, *they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment* by all, as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’”
(1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

Notice they are convicted as the *secrets of their hearts* are revealed.

12.

PROPHETS GONE WILD PART 3

6. What does it mean to prophesy from your soul?

Can I share with you something I found incredibly enlightening about Jeremiah's words concerning his contemporaries? Jeremiah never calls these supposed seers, who spoke of peace only, *false prophets*. These were real prophets (or at least they were or *pretended to be* at one time) prophesying what they (or the people, or the king) *wanted* to be true. I believe that this is a problem in our day. I have heard so many words about revival coming and the vast majority of them never materialize because they come from *desire* and *hope*, rather than from the mouth of God. Something to note here is that I am super pro-revival, having come out of the Brownsville Revival. But I long for the real thing, not a hyped-up counterfeit. When a true visitation comes, the *man of God* doesn't have to tell you it has begun. In Brownsville/Pensacola—every one of those 1,000 people gathered there knew that God had arrived on Father's Day 1995 ... *and He stayed for about five years*.

Most people assume that the prophets falsely prophesying peace and prosperity in Jeremiah's day were from another god, when, in fact, they came as prophets of Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews. It is true that Jeremiah refers to them as lying prophets, but he never uses the term that we use in Hebrew for false prophets: the noun-phrase, *navi sheker*—literally, a *prophet of lies*. Actually, the phrase is nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures. It was coined in Hebrew only after the Bible was written in the Mishnah (Sanhedrin Aleph, Mishnah Heh, כ"ה-כ"ו). Don't get me wrong, we still get the description of what we refer to today as a false prophet in Deuteronomy 18: "But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."

1. He speaks in the name of another god.
2. He speaks what God did not say, in the name of Yahweh.

Most charismatic teachers see a few more categories in the New Testament era, where prophecy is for every believer (Acts 2:17).

3. A true prophet, who, for immoral reasons, such as pride, greed, sexual favors, etc. uses prophecy for his gain. (By calling him a “true prophet” we don’t mean to declare that he is living in truth, but that he truly has the gift.)
4. A true prophet who makes a mistake. It happens, for whatever reason. If the prophecy is public, there needs to be public accountability and repentance.
5. A believer seeking to grow in their ability to prophesy who gets things wrong. It is always best to learn to prophesy in a controlled environment, like a home group.

But why would the standard be lower in the New Testament? As we have stated:

1. The people of God are not as dependent on the prophets to know what God is saying in light of the fact that we have the word of God.
2. Each believer now possesses the Spirit of God and can hear God and discern on his own through the same Spirit.
3. Every believer is encouraged to grow in their ability to prophesy.

I do not know any charismatic teachers who still hold to the Deuteronomy 18 standard. People who will criticize a more gracious approach to dealing with prophecy as being *off* or *weak* are, ninety-nine percent of the time, people who do not have any experience in prophecy or even believe in modern prophecy.

Now, this is not at all to give license to sloppy prophecy. It is no small thing to speak a false word in the name of the true God. But not everyone who prophesies incorrectly is a false prophet. Recently, a friend of mine who made a mistake 30 years ago in the prophetic and repented several times for it, was publicly slandered and called a *false prophet* by someone who doesn’t have one percent of the fruit in ministry that my colleague does and doesn’t even practice prophecy. Just as it is no small thing to prophesy incorrectly, *it is no small thing to call someone a false prophet*. You had better be sure! Furthermore, we do not declare people to be false prophets by ourselves in

YouTube videos or on Facebook. Just as you don't declare someone guilty of a crime outside of a court of law, a potential false prophet should be judged in such matters by a team of uncompromised apostolic leaders—not “Billy” in his pajamas on Twitter.

While we do not see it in the Hebrew Scriptures, the term, false prophet, does appear in the New Testament 11 times. In the Greek, it calls them *pseudo-prophetes*, or pseudo prophets, meaning not genuine, false or supposed-prophets. It is slightly different from the Hebrew term, “prophet of lies”. Looking at each of the 11 instances, it is clear that it is referring to an evil person—an unbeliever, and not a person who made an error.

Three times the term refers to the “second beast” of Revelation 13—the person we call the false prophet. Clearly, he is not someone who just makes a mistake, but is pure evil and persecutes God's people. Peter describes them like this:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.” (1 Peter 2:1-3)

Therefore, before you label someone a false prophet because they prophesied falsely, see if they fit the description above.

Now, getting back to Jeremiah. In Scripture when there are two sets of prophets prophesying contradicting messages, it is normally the ones with the bad news that are right. Why? ***Because it is easy to prophesy good news.*** It takes little courage to say, “God loves you and has a great plan for your life.” However, it takes real mettle to point your finger at King David and call him a murdering adulterer, as Nathan did.

A couple of years ago, a dear friend of mine, who leads a network of congregations, was in a crisis in his relationship with the pastors in their network. A bunch of us prayed for him. The temptation was to say, “Don't worry, everything's going to be OK.” That is certainly what we all wanted. But the Lord gave me a word for him, which was for him to be willing to let

the whole thing fall apart. That is what he did and, in the end, God raised up something even better! It had to die in order to live.

I believe we have many who prophesy out of their soul or their own imagination. Sometimes they prophesy out of their compassion, but not from the heart of God. I can think of times where someone prophesied over me—really good stuff—but I knew it was coming from their soul, not the heart of God. Other times, their own theology or *faulty* theology leads them into faulty prophecies—like telling everyone that Coronavirus is not going to hit America because God loves her. Or they may say that Coronavirus could never be judgment because only good things come from God.

Micaiah

While studying this issue, I noticed something I had not seen before in the story of Micaiah which you cannot see in the English translation: that the prophets who were wrong, are called *prophets of Yahweh*. That really surprised me.

In the case of Micaiah (I Kings 22), the text says that Jehoshaphat asked for “a prophet of Yahweh,” *seeming to say that the other prophets represented another god*. But, in Hebrew, it says, “Isn’t there here *another* prophet of the Lord.”

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט הֲאֵין פֹּה נָבִיא לַיהוָה עוֹד וַנִּדְרָשָׁה מֵאוֹתוֹ:

That is the Hebrew word עוד /ode or, “another.” In other words, the prophets who were wrong were also prophets of Yahweh (or at least were believed to be). Also, in verse eight, it does not say, “There is *still* one prophet through whom we can inquire of the Yahweh” (as it appears in English). It says in Hebrew, “there is **one more prophet** through whom we can inquire of Yahweh” meaning Micaiah was an *additional* prophet of Yahweh. It seems that maybe these others were once true prophets who had become corrupted over time.

וַיֹּאמֶר מִלְכָּה־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוֹשָׁפָט עוֹד אִישׁ־אֶחָד לְדָרֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה מֵאוֹתוֹ

The way it appears in English is that Micaiah was the only prophet of Yahweh, when in fact, it appears that all of these so-called prophets claimed to be prophets of Yahweh. Of course, this does not automatically mean that

they were true prophets. I'm making a distinction in how they presented themselves. In the story of Elijah and the prophets of Ba'al and Ashtoreth (1 Kings 18), it is very clear ***that these were prophets of other gods and not of Yahweh.***

Look at verses 11 and 12.

“Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns and he declared, ‘This is what *Yahweh* says: “With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.” All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. ‘Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious,’ they said, ‘for *Yahweh* will give it into the king’s hand.’” (1 Kings 22:11-12)

Often in Hebrew, “Lord” can just mean Lord, (which is Adonai, אֲדֹנָי) or it can be specific to the God of Israel, Yahweh. Here it is clearly Yahweh, not the generic Adonai or Lord.

¹¹וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ צִדְקִיָּה בֶן-כְּנַעֲנָה קְרָנִי בַרזֶל וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה בְּאֵלֶּה תִּנְגַּח אֶת-אֲרָם עַד-כָּלֹתָם:

¹²וְכָל-הַנְּבִיאִים נְבִיאִים כֵּן לֵאמֹר עָלֶה רֶמֶת גִּלְעָד וְהִצַּלַּח וְנָתַן יְהוָה בְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ:

Virtually all of the major prophetic voices in America, who went on record, predicted that this virus would be over soon. Several declared that it would end at Passover, several months ago; and yet, every day we are breaking new records for Corona cases and deaths. I'm absolutely not saying that these men are evil. I am simply saying that there is a great human temptation to prophesy *out of what we want to be true*. Everyone wanted this to be over.

I can testify that, while I never considered the things that happened this year and have no track record of predicting future events other than God telling me things that would happen in my own life, the first thing I felt the Lord say when this all began was *be ready*. Because this was the *beginning of birth pangs*, not a quick bump in the road and then on to prosperity and blessing, but the inauguration of a season that will lead us to the coming of Yeshua.

Listen friends, anyone who knows me knows I do not run around predicting doom and gloom. I would much rather this plague end tomorrow with everyone putting their arms around each other and the stock market hitting

40,000. Personally, our tour company has lost tens of thousands of dollars because tourism in Israel has been shut down. I would love for things to go back to the way they were, but it's just not what I'm seeing. I am sure that Jeremiah did not enjoy being alone while saying that destruction was coming, but God was angry with the prophets who only prophesied positive things."

"Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with *false hopes*. *They speak visions from their own minds*, not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise me,
'The LORD says: 'You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.'

"But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word?

Who has listened and heard his word? I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied.

"But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds." (Jeremiah 23:16-18, 21-22)

Again, we have to be discerning and make sure to not prophesy out of our own imaginations or our soul.

7. Prophecy is more than predicting things coming to pass

Prophecy is never for the purpose of simply predicting. That is what psychics do. Just getting it right is not biblical prophecy. The reason Agabus was shown the famine was so they could collect funds for the saints in Jerusalem. Prophecy has a purpose; it comes to "edify" the people in the "church" and is "for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort." (1 Corinthians 14:3-4)

A self-proclaimed prophet wrote in April 2020, "Tonight, the LORD spoke these words to me, 'George Soros's days and hours are numbered,'" seeming to say the billionaire financier of many left-wing projects was going to die soon. That was it. No call to prayer, no reasoning behind sharing it publicly. *Dude's going to die—end of subject*. Even if this comes to pass (he is 89, so it's

not exactly going out on a limb), where is the redemptive purpose in posting this? By the way, that was six months ago, and (very) old George is still with us.

Prophecy comes to encourage us when everything else says the opposite. David's prophecy that he would be king was not needed when he killed the giant, but during the decade in which he was running from Saul. It gave him hope and strength. Joseph needed an angel to tell him how Miriam got pregnant. You can only imagine his shock when Miriam tried to explain to him that she was pregnant and yet still a virgin. The other Joseph in Egypt didn't just interpret Pharaoh's dream but had supernatural wisdom on how to manage the coming famine. Then, when he was in jail, he relied on his dreams from his childhood that he would one day be a great leader. To just say, "*I see such and such happening in the future,*" is not what we see from prophets in the Bible.

13.

PROPHETS GONE WILD PART 4

8. Independent prophets giving words to the nation are not seen in the New Testament.

No *one, lone prophet* should be speaking for the Lord to the nation(s) during a pandemic without counsel from other leaders. Unlike in the Old Testament, New Testament prophets should consult with apostles and other prophets, praying and submitting prophetic words of great consequence—*such as the end of Coronavirus*—to test the word before issuing it on Facebook, through email or in a YouTube video. That is what we see in Acts 13 and 15. I cannot tell you how helpful the counsel from other leaders has been, when I felt I heard something of consequence from the Lord.

There are no such things as independent ministries in Acts and there are no such things as unaccountable leaders. Please read that last statement again. NO SUCH THING! Even Paul submitted to James and the elders in Acts 21.

Let's take for example, a recent event where a prophet said in February that he had seen the end of the coronavirus. He later said that a pandemic that kills millions of people is not God's story for our generation; I assume blaming the pandemic on Satan.

If he shared that with other leaders before he did publicly, some good questions would have been:

- How did you receive that word?
- Was it an impression?
- Did you receive it through a dream?
- Was there an angelic visitation?
- Are you sure God spoke to you or is this based more on your belief that God would never release a judgment like this?

- Do you understand that when you make a blanket statement such as: “The Lord is saying, ‘I am removing the threat of this,’” that you will be held accountable if it doesn’t come to pass?
- Are you sure that you received this at a level that you can speak for God in the first person?”

It appears that he did not do this. I know this because we (me and another leader) had an email conversation with this brother, after the fact. When we corresponded, he stood by his word. We lovingly encouraged him to consider that maybe he did not hear from God, as the death toll continued to rise to over 40,000 (this was in May). Just to be clear, when we talk about holding someone accountable for a false prophetic word, we don’t believe that means we need to stone him; just as Yeshua had mercy on the woman caught in adultery, even though the Torah demanded a death sentence. As I’ve said, being held accountable means that you repent for giving the false word and then you seek the Lord *with other leaders* to find out where you missed it, where you erred, and then learn from that mistake. The New Testament is always redemptive to those who repent. Although some, in more conservative circles of Christianity, believe that giving a false word should lead to permanent repudiation (a type of spiritual leper status), I find such attitudes, particularly from people who don’t even believe in prophecy, the exact opposite of the heart of Yeshua.

But there are reasons why prophetic people do not want to submit their word to others before releasing it.

- We don’t want to be told that the word is not from God.
- Egos are involved and we want people to see our prophecy.
- We confuse impulsiveness and a lack of discipline with *prophetic urgency*. (I have been guilty of this! More than once!)
- With the coronavirus, it’s very possible that some were *eager to be the first* to predict its demise, and thus be credited with this in the future.
- Sadly, some know that even giving a false word in a bold manner will build their platform and following. (It’s shocking, I know!)
- In that prophetic moment, you feel that you know best and the word must be released—now. Others won’t understand.

I know what you might be thinking: how could men and women of God act like this? Well, we shouldn't and it's definitely not acceptable! But as James says, referring to Elijah, he was just a man like you and me (James 5:17). James was trying to encourage us that we can be like Elijah and that a righteous man's prayers can be powerful and effective (James 5:16). Sadly, it is also true that just as the man of God ran from Jezebel and wanted to commit suicide after the greatest victory of his entire ministry life, so we, too, can give in to the flesh.

When I felt that God had given me a prophetic word after the George Floyd murder, it was all over me. *I had to release it.* Yet, I had to use self-control to first submit it to six different leaders. As much as I wanted to share it immediately and felt that the Holy Spirit wanted me to share it immediately, I needed their wisdom (and I needed to follow my own advice). Even though the Holy Spirit is perfect, my ability to hear Him apart from the guidance of other leaders is very much *imperfect*.

Fortunately, they all bore witness to the word. Two of them gave me excellent advice on how to phrase it—advice that I would not have received had I acted impulsively. It only took an extra few hours.

In some ways we've already answered this, but imagine if Elijah had had some peers in ministry to encourage him the day that he received word from Jezebel that she was going to kill him. (1 Kings 19) He was all alone with his servant and, eventually, even left his servant (v. 3) as he went deeper into the desert. It was there that he contemplated suicide.

Now imagine if he had been surrounded by other brothers in the faith who could have encouraged him with words such as: "Praise God, Elijah! Did you see God answer by fire yesterday? We've never seen such things in Israel! Hallelujah! It was powerful! Don't worry about Jezebel. God has your back." Then, turning to the other friends, "Let's pray for Elijah."

Unbelievers are now mocking so-called prophets who have acted independently. On February 15th, one well-known prophet gave a word that is now playing on an atheistic liberal group's website. They are mocking him (and us) because he seemed to say that the Coronavirus would have no great consequence in the U.S. He said that God is going to have mercy on the U.S. because President Trump honors God and has promoted godly policies.

Understand that this same man boldly prophesied^{xx} just before the midterm

election that God was going to give a massive three-branch Republican victory at such a level that the Democrats would say, “What do we have left?” In reality, Republicans lost 41 seats in the House, which has completely frustrated President Trump’s ability to pass legislation. It was false.

But he prophesies that God has already stripped the enemy of power at the executive branch and “... he shall strip it at the legislative branch.” Well, that did not happen. And while he talks about the Supreme Court moving to the right as well (for the three-branch victory), in reality President Trump and Vice-President Pence are furious that Chief Justice Roberts has shifted to the left, giving left-wing victories since this prophecy was given.

Moses would have had him stoned (which I am not recommending, but just expressing the seriousness of false prophecy), but these guys do not skip a beat. He is featured as a prophet on Christian television *all the time!* There should be accountability for such things. We look like fools in the eyes of the lost.

When he prophesied that COVID-19 would have no great effect in the U.S., no one in America had died (that we knew of) and there were only a few cases. Today there have been over 5,500,000 cases in the US and nearly 200,000 deaths. Sadly, this prophecy gave many people *false* hope and maybe even caused them to be complacent, resulting in sickness or even death. It was false by all measures, based on hope, but not by the Holy Spirit.

Not only was America not spared; *it would appear that the U.S. has been hit the hardest!* If being spared would have been a sign of God’s mercy because of our obedience, what should we conclude that God is saying to us now that we have been affected more than any other nation? Are we being disciplined? Is this judgment? And, if it is, why are we being judged? Don’t blame Hollywood—judgment starts with the house of God!

Then he came back in March and prophesied again. This time he said, among other things, “Out of [the coronavirus] shall come something sweet, so that they will say, how could a virus that created such fear unify a nation, the United States?” ^{xxi}

Again, I am surprised that they keep that video on YouTube, as it testifies against them. *The Coronavirus absolutely did not unify the United States*—such as other events like 9/11 did. Just turn on the news. The primary thing that Democrats are saying is the reason not to vote for President Trump is his handling of the coronavirus. I am not saying I agree with them; I am saying

that we are more disunified than ever. In other words, the exact opposite of his prophecy has come to pass. Police are being shot and anarchists have taken over cities. Unity? Something sweet? Just open your Facebook. It's hard for me because I see Christians using the ugliest language as they give their opinions about politics and the coronavirus. No, there is little unity in America right now.

He prophesied about this sweet unity in March, not realizing that the most devastating, disunifying racial riots would be coming upon America in less than two months. I don't know that America has ever been more disunified since the 1960s. This appears to be a prophecy coming from his *soul*, and *not the heart of God*. I'm not sharing this to belittle the man, but to warn you to beware. We have to be more discerning, beloved. If you look at the comments, everyone is bearing witness. No one even suggests that it might not be an accurate word.

And then, like the other prophets I mentioned before, he goes on to prophesy about the coming prosperity to America and to the global markets.

The man that many consider the father of the prosperity gospel boldly prophesied a heatwave for Easter to burn up the virus. "All God needs to do to deliver us is a heatwave, a supernatural heatwave." It turns out that the COVID-19 virus is not bothered a bit by heat.

"You know with weather, usually you get what they call the Easter spell. When you think everything is warming up, all of a sudden you get a cold front. Well now, this year it's going to be a[n] Easter heatwave. It's going to get so hot in New York City. It's going to get so hot and muggy, glory to God! It's going to hit that place and it's going to burn that virus. It's going to. You know what it's like in New York City at 85 or 90 degrees. It's going to get however hot it has to get there to kill that thing right now all over this nation and the rest of the world where it's needed."

He said, "*God told me* to believe Him for a heatwave," and then stated:

"[The virus] hates heat. It hates humidity, it hates water. It just dies. It's even better, *I just heard the Lord* say this cause I've witnessed it, it's even better if there is no wind at all ... just enough heat to keep from killing them people in New York City."

If we are to believe this, then God knows less than the scientists, because apparently heatwaves have no impact. In my other country, Israel, where it is much hotter, cases skyrocketed this summer. Instead of a heatwave at Easter, the U.S. had deadly tornados in the following days (including in his home state of Texas). During the week of Easter, there was *snow* in Chicago! And yet this prophecy is still on YouTube and Vimeo, which only reveals that they know their supporters aren't going anywhere. What a sad commentary on the gullibility of the body of believers today! Oh, that they would be transparent and simply admit that it was a false prophecy, and then ask for forgiveness.

A week before that he stated publicly:

“Standing in the office of the prophet of God I execute judgment on you, COVID-19. I execute judgment on you, Satan. You get off this nation! I demand judgment on you ... I demand, I demand, I demand, a vaccination to come immediately. I call you gone! You will destroy through COVID-19 no more. It is finished. It is over. And the United States of America is healed and well, again, sayeth the mighty spirit of peace who is also the Prince of war, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Friends, that was five months ago, and sadly, it does not seem that this man is planning to express some sense of remorse or give some explanation to explain how he could be speaking for God in the first person and, yet, America is not healed and well and there was no Easter heatwave. *Where is the fear of the Lord?* We cannot play fast and loose with God's name, issuing false declarations that give people false hope.

Another nationally known prophetic minister, the one to whom we reached out, prophesied the end of Coronavirus back on February 28th. He said, “The Lord showed me the end of the Coronavirus ... the tide is turning now!”

“Even now several vaccines are coming out as well as a natural dying out of the virus itself. The Lord is saying, *I am removing the threat of this.*’ Within a short amount of time the extreme threat will feel like it is in the faraway past.”

He responded graciously but stood by the prophecy. However, when we challenged him deeper, he said he would get back to us, *but never did*. Again, that was in May 2020. In August 2020, he said in a video that things did not go *as he expected*, but did not repent for speaking for God in the first person, saying that this was going to end shortly. His explanation would be fine if all

he had released in February were his *expectations*—but he did not. He spoke for God, saying that He was putting an end to the virus.

Lastly, one young prophet claimed to see an angel come down with the sword of the Lord and he asked the Lord about the angel.^{xxii}

“[The Lord] said that the angel of the Lord has been sent on assignment to take care of this particular virus of corona. He said to mark the calendar, March 27th because something is going to take place that will be a shift in the realm of the Spirit, and he said by May 7th there will be something that will also shift again in the realm of the Spirit, and you will know that I have driven the sword of the Lord into this particular virus. I’m telling you we’re going to see a major shift and you need to mark March the 27th and then May the 7th. Mark it down. Everything is going to line up and we are going to see a massive, massive change.”

When March 27th came and went without any major noticeable *shift*, he posted several things that happened, none of which constituted a shift and two of which proved to be completely irrelevant. If God is going to send you an angel and tell you to mark your calendar, and then you tell the world to mark their calendars, I would assume the “shift” that was to take place *would be evident to all*. Instead, this fellow has to explain to us what happened because, in reality, *there was no shift*. On May 7th I could not find anything on his Facebook page. It was as if he just ignored it, realizing (without admitting) that something was amiss. It would be so much better for him and his hearers to simply come clean and ask for forgiveness. I reached to him, but he did not respond.

I cannot tell you how burdened I am over this. What breaks my heart is not so much that they are releasing what appear to be false words, but it’s the number of believers, *millions of them*, who follow these men as if they are prophets. Then, on the other side, those who speak out against this type of ministry are often the most cynical, anti-Holy Spirit people you have ever met. They are so sarcastic that you wonder if they are even believers. God help us!

(I have enjoyed writing this book so much, but I have to tell you writing this last point about knocked me out. I feel like somebody spewed garbage all over me.)

I think that one of the reasons these fellows are so prone to miss it is that

they always feel that dramatic prophecies must be on the national level. New Testament prophets *primarily* function in the *local church, not on a national stage*. 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 focus on prophecy *in the congregation*. There is no teaching on giving words to a nation. Yet there are hundreds of self-appointed prophets who have no legitimate covering or accountability, but develop their following using social media. Clearly, God still speaks to nations. Now is definitely a time when we need to hear His voice. But something is amiss in regard to *order and accuracy* when several “national prophets” are consistently off. These are only just a few; someone could write a book on the amount of inaccurate prophecy that is being released today.

9. How we prophesy in the New Testament

All throughout the Old Covenant we see prophets speaking for God in the first person, saying “This is what the Lord says ...” I’ve searched the entire book of Acts and I do not see that type of language being used when people are sharing what God had revealed to them by his Holy Spirit.

- We are not sure how God communicated to the teachers and prophets in Acts 13 that Barnabas and Saul were to be separated.
- In Peter’s prophetic sharing in Acts 1, 2 and 10, he never says, “This is what the Lord says.”
- Instead, you see something very different when they give prophetic information as they quote the Old Testament ... see Acts 1, 2, & 13 (Paul in Antioch and Pisidia).

That is a very significant change. If you listen to some of those who prophesy today, they may go on five or ten minutes, speaking as if they’re quoting God. In one of the videos above, you would have to assume that the prophet is reading from something he has been shown in the spirit *or is making it up*. It goes on and on. (Considering things that he declared in the name of the Lord did not happen, we could assume something was severely amiss.)

You can certainly be moved by the Holy Spirit to bring a message, but why not preface it by saying, “this is what I am sensing?” It would seem to me that when you say, “Thus says the Lord (Yahweh)” and you are not saying what Yahweh is saying, you are using His name in vain, and that is not a minor mistake.

When Jacob (James), the brother of Yeshua and the most senior apostle in Jerusalem gives the earth-shattering, massive direction-changing message to believers in Acts 15, he doesn't say, "Thus says the Lord." Understand, *this was the most significant theological decision of the early believers*: Do Gentiles have to convert to Judaism to receive Yeshua? If ever there was a time to invoke the name of God in the first person, it was then. Look at Jacob's words: "For *it seemed* good to the Holy Spirit and to us." (Acts 15:28) And, this was after quoting Old Testament passages, as was their custom.

While they do not use the language of Old Testament prophets, we see the spirit of God speaking to people constantly throughout the book of Acts. Peter has his vision in Acts chapter 10, Paul has a dream about Macedonia in chapter 16, and then the Lord shows him, in Acts 27, that everyone on the ship with him will survive. These are just a few of the instances.

All that tells me is that the believer should be hearing from God all the time. But when we prophesy, we tone down our language. We do not see anyone closing their eyes and speaking in the name of God for five to ten minutes or more.

Only in Acts chapter 21 do we finally see a prophet speaking for God in the first person, when Agabus prophesies to Paul, saying, "*The Holy Spirit says ...*" What does that tell me? It tells me that, yes, we do see prophecy like this in the New Testament era, *but it is very rare*. It goes to support what we have been saying: in light of having a very deep revelation of God in Scripture that they didn't have in times past, we do not have the need we once had for constant, direct revelation like that. Also, with every believer being encouraged to prophesy, "your sons and daughters will prophesy," it would not be good for everyone in the congregation to be running around saying, "This is what the Lord says." What we do see from some is a constant stream of this type of language and, yet, we are warned to be aware of false prophets. Beware of anyone who is constantly saying, "This is what the Lord says ..." I am not saying that it is evidence that they are off, but it is a reason to be more discerning and not assume that everything they say that begins with, "This is what the Lord says," is really *what the Lord is saying*. We need to be a discerning, not gullible people—open to all things, but not to the point that we shed all common sense.

10. Prophecy from humans is filtered through the imperfections of humans.

Most prophecy is filtered through our emotions, theology, hurts, victories,

our past, etc. It is very subjective, which is why we must test all prophecy. (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21) The word of God, on the other hand, *is not subjective* and has no negative experiences or hurts that can cloud it. It, thus, becomes the first standard by which we seek to test prophecy, and the second test is by the witness of other prophetic people.

This has to do with theology, too. If your theology is off in some areas, your prophecies may be as well. If you don't believe that believers can suffer, then how can you prophesy that someone or a nation is going to suffer? If you don't believe in judgment, you cannot prophesy judgment. And for those who think that all New Testament prophecy is rosy, the only two examples from one of the two people who were called a prophet in the N.T. were warnings: one about a famine and the other that Paul was going to be persecuted in Jerusalem.

People who do not have any understanding of prophecy or who have never prophesied can assume that New Testament prophecy is as clear as Old Testament prophecy. So, when we talk about filters or processing what you believe you have heard from God, it sounds strange; "Elijah didn't *process*." But, again, these folks have no paradigm for New Testament prophecy or hearing God's voice, so they are hardly experts on what the definition is or practice of something they don't even believe in. It would be like me giving a lecture about life on other planets—not only do I know nothing about it, but I don't even consider that it exists.

I maintain that most of the time prophetic insight is not as dramatic as what we see in the Old Covenant. I've already shared this, but I'll say it again: In the Old Covenant the people were utterly dependent on the prophet to hear from God. The people were mostly illiterate and, even if they could read, there was very little access to what parts of the word of God had already been written down. Things have dramatically changed now in that regard and we live in a time when God wants every believer to be able to prophesy.

I can tell you that I have never heard the audible voice of God. Yet, I have prophesied. I have never seen an angel (that I know of) and, yet, I have prophesied. I've seen visions and often get prophetic dreams. Paul says that until Yeshua returns, " ... we know in part and prophesy in part," and "for now we see in a mirror, dimly."

Again, if you don't believe in prophecy or practice prophecy, if you don't believe that the power of God is for today, and you don't pray in tongues,

then all this just sounds weird. Sorry! Maybe if you had an experience like the believers did in the book of Acts, and maybe if you were crying out to God in prayer and fasting that He would visit you with such power, then things might make a little bit more sense. I do believe that in these times, believers are going to need to know how to access the power of the Holy Spirit. This is prophetic encouragement to my more conservative friends: it is time to ask God to baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

The fastest growing segment of Christianity is the charismatic movement, growing much faster than more conservative versions. You don't want to be facing the Antichrist without the full equipping of tools that God has for you. I can tell you that my spirit is bearing witness right now that *this is a word for you*, my conservative friends!

11. The Witness of the Spirit

The Old Testament prophets (and saints) could not test a word by the “witness” of the Holy Spirit in their own spirit. This is the primary way that the Spirit speaks to most believers (apart from the written word, of course)—through His inner witness. Most of the times that God speaks to me are when I say something or think something, and it is followed by a sense of God's presence in my belly. I know that many others can relate to this. Other times it is when I get deep thoughts about things that will happen and, suddenly, I can just feel these thoughts becoming *solid* inside me. *I wish we had better words in English to explain such things.*

The Old Testament prophet had a high level of authority. Again, just imagine Nathan confronting the king of Israel. People were very dependent on the prophet. They didn't go home and pray about Jeremiah's word. Look how Moses reacted to the golden calf affair:

“And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.” (Exodus 32:20)

Imagine your pastor trying to do that! :-)

The Old Testament saint could not weigh the word against the Bible either. For a long time, it was not yet written and even after it was, it was not accessible to each person, or even if it was, most people were illiterate, as we stated. Old Testament saints were very reliant on the prophet.

Thus, the New Testament prophet does not need the same level of authority as Elijah or Moses because:

1. Each individual believer has the indwelling Spirit.
2. We have the word of God.
3. Prophets serve with a team of fivefold ministers.

12. Warning

After Paul lays out his teaching on prophecy, he makes it very clear that if you disobey or reject his teaching, you are not a prophet.

“If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.” (1 Corinthians 14:37-38)

This is a good picture of the fact that prophets were not to minister outside of apostolic oversight. Paul, *the apostle*, brings his apostolic authority to bear on this matter of prophecy, prophets, and order in the New Testament worship service. Therein is the reason that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12:28, lists apostles in the congregations above prophets. Prophets must be under authority for their own good and the good of their hearers. The apostle does not possess as flamboyant a gift as the prophet, but he has the essential wisdom to guide the prophet in a team setting.

Note: John and the two witnesses are exceptions and for good reason. John was writing end-time Bible prophecy as an apostolic Scripture writer and the two witnesses of Revelation 11 do not come in the form of Ephesians 4:11 congregational prophets, but in the likeness of the Hebrew prophets. There is a reason John said no one could add to his words—to stop any would-be prophets from seeking to write Scripture in the future.

Final Thoughts

I love prophecy and prophetic ministry. I believe in it! I also believe that we have to sharpen our theology on prophecy and prophets, and accept deeper accountability so we can serve the Body better. We need to hear God in our day.

14.

DOES GOD STILL JUDGE?

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (Revelation 2:4-5)

A popular prophetic speaker and author wrote, shortly after the beginning of the pandemic, that *God no longer judges; He poured all of His judgment on Jesus on the cross.*

“These occurrences are not judgments from God. Jesus took all judgments and cursing when He went to the cross. Any cursing and judgments that are left are end-times prophecies. Coronavirus is NOT a judgment from God.”

This is taught all over the body of believers today—that God no longer judges. But is this theologically sound? Since we’re speaking about prophecy, prophets and prophetic utterances, note that this is an incredibly important period, because if someone has a theology that is not accurate, it will affect their ability to hear God. It’s worth noting that after his prophecies that Corona would be quickly defeated did not come to pass, he confessed that it did not unfold as he expected.

“I could have never predicted this. God never gave me insight into this on this level ... I’m such a positive person, I would have never seen that ... (regarding wearing face masks) I would have never seen that in a million years.”

Of course, this is one reason why it is wiser to tone down prophetic language and, except in rare cases, to not speak for God in the first person. If you are going to give a prophecy where you speak “thus says the Lord,” *you better be sure you’re hearing from God.* You can’t just come back a few months later and say, *boy that’s not what I thought was going to happen*—not without repenting

to your hearers for giving them false hope and then submitting yourself to counsel from other leaders.

Had he said, “I sense that this is not going to be an open-ended pandemic,” or “I sense that God is going to put an end to this,” it would have been much better. But once you say, “This is what God is saying,” *there is no out*. You own those words. In 30 years of ministry I don’t think I have ever publicly used the phrase, “*this is what the Lord says*” or “*thus saith the Lord*” — except one time, just recently. (See chapter on racism)

Judgment in the New Testament

It has become a common theme in certain circles that God no longer judges; that “judgment ceased with the death and resurrection of Yeshua.” There is certainly a lot of truth to that. For the believer, we are no longer living under God’s judgment or wrath. Our names are written in heaven. But, in terms of God judging cities and nations, that has not ceased. In fact, every unbeliever lives in a constant state of judgment until they accept the freedom that Yeshua purchased for them.

Do you not agree that Portland, Oregon is under judgment? Or Seattle, Washington? Judgment can simply be the obvious result of a bad decision. A chronic smoker gets cancer. An obese person has a heart attack. The alcoholic’s liver fails. In liberal cities where they tolerate crime, like Chicago, Illinois, the result is murder. In San Francisco, California, the homeless defecate on the sidewalks.

Beyond that, we can see several places where God did judge someone or warn of coming judgment in the New Testament—both with believers and unbelievers. Not all judgment is eternal damnation. The reason why this is so important is because theology, as we said in the chapter on prophets and pitfalls, colors our prophetic sense. Like the brother we mentioned above, he could never see anything like Coronavirus or wearing masks because he does not have a theology that believes God will do something like this about our human condition or even allow it.

Judgment begins with the house of God

The most obvious place to begin is the most obvious verse.

“For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17)

This is a principle that begins with Israel. God always held Israel to a higher standard than the nations around her. Why? Because Israel had so much more in the word of God.

“Here in 1 Peter the idea seems to be that the coming of the Lord in His eschatological judgment has, as a harbinger, a beginning of ‘birth pains’ that will purify believers.”^{xxiii}

In other words, the birth pang judgments are meant as a wake-up call to believers. It is like God is saying, “Get ready for what is to come. Get your priorities in order. Remember the Great Commission. Prepare for persecution ...”

For instance, as we will share in the chapter on racism, I’m deeply convicted that the correct response to George Floyd’s murder was for white believers to reach out to black Americans with the love of Jesus. Unfortunately, most people took sides based on their political affiliation. Republicans acted one way and Democrats the other. Meanwhile, I sensed that God was saying for us look up and align ourselves with His priorities. Could it be that God was seeking to get our attention? As an end-times believer, you cannot think primarily as a Republican or Democrat, but as a follower of the Messiah.

Judgment in the New Testament

Ananias and Saphira

These two were part of the early Yeshua-following movement. At that time, people were living in extraordinary generosity, often selling property and land and giving it all to the brand-new body of believers. Ananias and Saphira also sold some property and brought the funds to the apostles. However, they held back part of the profit and did not say anything. This is the first recorded case of selfishness after Acts 2.

You know the story. Peter confronts them both separately, and does not even give them time to repent. He tells Ananias, a born-again believer, that Satan has filled his heart and that he has not lied to man, but to the Holy Spirit...

and he dies. The same thing happens to his wife a few hours later. I would have to classify that as an immediate judgment and a warning sign to the fledgling body of believers.

This also should silence people who use 1 Corinthians 14:3 as proof that all prophecy must be positive. Certainly, most of it is, and if it is negative, it should mostly be dealt with discreetly unless the Lord, for His own purposes, directs you otherwise, such as in this case where God used it to bring a deeper sense of the fear of the Lord to His people. (The fear of the Lord is not being afraid of God or thinking that any minute He might hurt us. It is accurately assessing His Holiness and purity, and treating Him as such. By holding back funds, they showed that they did not fear the Lord.)

Peter and Simon

Then, there's the story in Acts 8 where a former sorcerer who had come to faith and had been immersed in water by Phillip, offers money to Peter for the same ability that Peter had to give the Holy Spirit to people by the laying on of hands.

“Peter answered: ‘May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that He may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.’” (Acts 8:20-23)

I am not sure if I would classify this as judgment, but it was definitely a very heavy, non-cheery and non-positive prophetic word.

Paul and Bar-Jesus

Paul also has some very harsh words for the sorcerer, Bar-Jesus:

“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.” (Acts 13:10-11)

Romans 11

Paul warns the Romans, and the entire church, *because it is Scripture*, that if they turn against the Jewish people, God could cut them off from His household of faith.

“You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.’ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches, *He will not spare you either*.

“Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in His kindness. Otherwise, *you also will be cut off*.” (Romans 11:19-22)

There are a couple things here to notice. Number one: *these are believers*. The Lord is threatening them with being “cut off,” saying that they would not be spared if they judged the natural branches, the Jewish people.

The second thing is that Paul introduces two attributes of God: His kindness and His sternness. There are those today who love His kindness, as I do, but deny His sternness. Their view of the Father is all positive. To be clear, there is nothing negative in God, but it would be a mistake to think that He does not discipline His children, just as any good father would. (Hebrews 12:4-11) In this passage (Romans 11), it is not merely discipline, but complete separation. That is judgment.

Immoral Son

Then there is the young man in 1 Corinthians 5 who is committing adultery with his stepmother. Paul pronounces judgment upon him and *turns him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh*.

“As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this.” (1 Corinthians 5:3)

This judgment turned out to be redemptive, as the man later repents.

In 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul says of “Hymenaeus and Alexander” that he has “handed them over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.”

70 CE Jerusalem

Yeshua Himself, in Matthew 24, said that judgment was coming upon Jerusalem. He said, in referring to the Temple, that “...not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” (v. 2) Forty years later, it happened. In Luke 21, He talks about Jerusalem being surrounded and tells the believers to flee (which they did, having been warned by angels). He calls it “the time of punishment.” We believe that the Romans slaughtered more than one million Jews. It was one of the worse moments in Jewish history. This was not mild discipline, but judgment and He predicted it. It happened one generation *after* Yeshua rose from the dead.

While God is always looking for an opportunity to show mercy, it would be a mistake to say He no longer judges. Indeed, mercy triumphs over judgment, and God will judge up to the fourth generation but bestow favor up to one thousand generations. God is good and He wants to bless us. That’s our starting point. I want to be very clear here: God is not an angry God, looking for every opportunity to judge and punish. No! It is quite the opposite. He is loving and merciful, seeking every opportunity to forgive and show mercy. But it would be unbiblical and dangerous to live your life as if He never judges.

Discipline is different than judgment. Discipline comes to change your behavior, but judgment comes as a result of your behavior.

Interestingly enough, this same minister, months later, wrote about the same subject, saying:

“[Having a prophetic word of judgment] means we want Jesus to pay the price again on the cross because of what we see in the world right now. Jesus became the curse on the tree, He became all judgment on the tree, He doesn’t need to die again. God is no longer speaking judgments over regions and cities, industries and people.”

Jesus died for individuals. For the most part, those individuals are free from judgment, but as we can see from the passage in Romans 11, our disobedience can bring severe judgment or punishment. What about evil nations governed by evil people? Did God judge Germany after Hitler, by splitting it in half with a deadly wall between the two for 40 years? Did God judge Great Britain, who was once the best friend of the Jewish people and the most powerful nation on earth? From the time she turned against the Jewish people in 1922,

until Israel became a nation again in 1948, Great Britain lost control over much of her territory. She is now a shell of her former greatness. What about in Acts 12? Did God not judge Herod after the people said he was like a God?

“Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.”
(Acts 12:23)

Understand, this theology doesn't merely say that God no longer judges believers, but that God no longer judges anything!

Revelation, The Letters

The book of Revelation begins with seven letters to the seven congregations of Asia minor. These are red letter words, meaning the Risen Yeshua is speaking and some of what He says is harsh. He threatens to take away one congregation's lampstand. He says to another congregation that if they didn't repent of tolerating false teaching, He was coming to fight against the false teachers with “the sword of my mouth.” (Rev. 2:16) Is this not judgment?

The believers in Thyatira embraced a false teacher, nicknamed Jezebel, for her immortally. Listen to Yeshua:

“So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.” (Revelation 2:22-23)

A popular teaching today is that if you want to know what God is like just look at Jesus. Amen. I agree. But these folks are seeking to differentiate between the gentle Jesus of the New Covenant and the *supposed* angry God of the Old Testament. But they seem to have forgotten the book of Revelation.

People Who Love Judgment

No question, there are some angry prophets out there. But a true prophet of God, like Jeremiah, after they prophesy judgment, weeps over the people to whom they prophesied. I do remember years ago an acquaintance told me about how he prophesied a tornado. Amazingly it came to pass, and *several people died*. He seemed excited that his prophecy came to pass, and I asked

him, “You do understand that people died, don’t you?”

Last night Ruth Bader Ginsburg died. I wondered how long the Lord would let her live, given her frail health and the significance of her seat on the Supreme Court. But when she died, I wept. I could not help it. A Jewish woman was lost (most likely). Moreover, she died on the eve of the 10 holiest days of the Jewish calendar—*Erev Rosh Hashanah*. In my spirit I knew it was a harbinger.

I was shocked to see people openly rejoicing in her death. And some of you might be agreeing and saying, “Amen, her death will result in live babies.” Maybe (remember Justice Kennedy!).

But remember everything we have written about prophets. Ezekiel said, “Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, *I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked*, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?’” (Ezekiel 33:11) If God takes no pleasure in their death, who are we to? Jeremiah wept “over the slain of my people,” asking God to make his head a spring of water so he could weep over Israel. (Jeremiah 9:1) If most of us were David, we would have rejoiced over Saul’s demise. But David is broken over it.

“When David took hold of his clothes and tore them; and all the men who were with him did the same. They mourned and wept, and fasted until evening for Saul and for his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.” (2 Samuel 1:11)

But Facebook is the place for Christians to display the most ungodly, ugly comments about other people’s demise. Where is the heart of God? Where do we see Yeshua rejoicing over someone’s death? It is possible to rejoice when the wicked are removed and still mourn over the tragedy of their lives. And there is something about understanding the old adage, “But for the grace of God, go I.”

If you want to see judgment come down on others, be careful because you could be next. None of us are perfect. A New Testament prophet has a broken heart just as the Old Testament prophet. The problem is that many of these people who can move in prophecy or word of knowledge have been mistaken for prophets. The primary hallmark of an Old Testament prophet was not merely that they could tell you where you lived or what happened

in your life last year, but that they carried the heart of God. A true prophet feels God's pain and it drives him to prayer. Sometimes it expresses itself in righteous indignation, as with Nathan toward David; other times with great compassion, as we see in the life of Hosea.

Hosea prophesied both judgment and mercy, but he carried God's heart for Israel. Despite knowing that Israel deserved to be punished, his heart broke for her. He even married a prostitute (Hosea 1:2) who left him and cheated, and then took her back (Hosea 3:1) as a prophetic act to show that God would take back Israel. Concerning Israel, he cried:

“How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
My heart is changed within me;
all my compassion is aroused ...
“I will not carry out my fierce anger,
nor will I devastate Ephraim again.
For I am God, and not a man—
the Holy One among you.” (Hosea 11:8-9)

A true prophet of God takes no joy in the devastation of others. Hosea prophesies to unfaithful Israel: “I will commit myself to you forever—in steadfast love and tender compassion.” (Hosea 2:19) Many of the prophets that predicted the end of Corona have something in common. Their hearts do not appear to be broken over what is happening. I want to be careful here, but so many seem to be focused on making sure the ministry machine keeps running. A broken heart is the hallmark of a true prophet. Of course, if you cannot see judgment coming, you can't weep over its devastation.

One of the reasons that God made the prophet to feel so powerfully is so that he could stand in the gap, just as Moses did when God was going to destroy Israel and start anew with Moses. Moses was not a silly Facebook prophet. He told God, “But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, *then blot me out* of the book you have written.” WOW! *That* is love. We see the same thing coming from Paul in Romans 9, where he said he was willing to go to hell if only the Jewish people—his brothers—would believe.

Remember Jonah, who was angry that God relented when the people of Nineveh repented? Jonah, while being called as a prophet, did not have God's heart. There are many prophets like Jonah who want people to be punished and are more concerned with their prediction coming to pass than with the

devastating results of that prediction.

Don't stone the prophets!

Recently a pastor named Dana Coverstone shared several dreams he had. It would not have gotten so much attention but for the fact that he had a dream in December that predicted the pandemic. Apparently, he has several witnesses giving him credibility. His more recent dreams went viral on Facebook.

He has predicted wide-scale destruction and anarchy; even Russian and Chinese troops in the US this November. He has been attacked by other prophetic voices. Some dealt with it gently, while others have been outright angry, even arrogant. *How dare he prophesy anything but revival?*

What I find interesting is this. (And let me say that I don't think that we're going to see Russian and Chinese troops in the USA this November.) These prophets who only prophesied peace and prosperity, never saw the Coronavirus coming. They never saw the racial riots coming. None of them saw Lebanon explode. If someone had told them in December that these trials that we have seen recently were coming, and God forbid that they called them judgment, they would have rejected it.

Maybe we should take a step back and process what this brother is saying before we cast him off as a false prophet. Jeremiah was the true prophet when all the others were saying, "peace and safety." Again, I'm not saying that I believe his dreams were from the Lord or that he understands the timing or exactly what they mean. I really don't know. I do know this: things can change overnight. Rome may not have been built in a day, but Babylon fell overnight. (Daniel 5:30-31)

Yes, God still judges today, and prophets are still called to have broken hearts.

15.

I CAN'T BREATHE

“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Yeshua the Messiah must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” (James 2:1-4)

Malcolm Gladwell wrote in his book, *Tipping Point*, about how one event, even if it was small, could become a tipping point, a kind of “straw that broke the camel’s back”, leading to some sort of revolution. It is defined as “the point at which a series of small changes or incidents become significant enough to cause a larger, more important change.” The tipping point is when the last of those small changes results in something far bigger than it would have if it had happened in a vacuum. The straw that did break the camel’s back would have had little effect without all the other things that had been previously placed on the said camel’s poor back.

I don’t mean revolution in the *Bolshevik* sense, necessarily, but simply enough energy compiled over several similar events that results in some critical mass leading to an explosion. I am speaking of the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers.

Most of us respect and trust the police officers. And most of America, while horrified at the different acts of police brutality over the last several years, never believed that racism was systemic in police departments. However, watching Officer Derek Chauvin place his knee on George Floyd’s neck for almost 10 minutes changed things for a large number of not just Americans, but people all over the world. It was horrifying to look at the callous, almost smirk, on Chauvin’s face as George Floyd died.

There were mass protests all over the world and smaller groups of violent riots. Some rioted out of genuine hopelessness and frustration, while a large

number of anarchists used it as an opportunity for mayhem and theft. A much larger percentage marched for change.

I felt that the Lord was dealing with me about some of the reactions I was seeing, but I made the mistake of simply sharing what He was sharing with me *as my opinion*, as opposed to something deeper, *prophetic*, and as something coming from the heart of God. Everybody had an opinion. And that's good. Thank God we don't live in countries where we can't express our opinions, like Syria, Russia, Iran or China. For over a week, I did not want to weigh it. Then, suddenly, I felt grace to share something (edited for clarity):

Eight Minutes and Forty-Six Seconds

I have wanted to say something about the death, scratch that, murder of George Floyd, but I have hesitated because it is not one simple issue. So, let's start here: The fact that this man, former officer Derek Chauvin, had a police badge is a massive wake up call to what is wrong in law enforcement in the US. I am sure there are many good cops in Minneapolis, but how many saw the warning signs with Chauvin: The racism, the joy of having authority over others (as opposed to serving)?

You have to wonder about the three other former officers: Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao. Were they similar to Chauvin or were they intimidated by him? We have all seen how bullies operate.

*How many people saw this fellow's evil tendencies and said, "It is not my problem. I don't want to get involved." **He had 17 complaints against him.** I assume that is high. You can add 16 more.*

Why? Because 16 times George Floyd says, "I can't breathe" and calls out for his mother. After it appears Floyd is unconscious, a bystander pleads with the officer to get off of him, at which he angrily pulls out mace to threaten the concerned eyewitness. A man passionately yells, "Bro! He's NOT MOVING!" The police do not seem to care.

Let's say an autopsy confirms (preliminary reports say it was combination of all the events that day and underlying heart disease) that Floyd suffered a heart attack unrelated to the knee on his neck. Let's suppose for a second that Chauvin did not kill him directly. Still, 16 times George Floyd says, "I can't breathe!" He is in handcuffs! One of the cops yells at him several times telling him to get in the car (while three men are holding him down.) Floyd says, "I will," but they don't

give him the chance. Chauvin still has a smug look on his face. In other words, in the best possible scenario for Chauvin, he is a horrible human being and complicit in Floyd's death. In the worst case, he is a murderer.

(Note added: I understand that George Floyd may not have died exclusively from Officer Chauvin's knee on his neck. He apparently had a high level of fentanyl in his system and some pre-existing health issues. However, the police officers did not know this and still Chauvin showed no mercy, even when Floyd said repeatedly that he could not breathe and called out in desperation for his mother—as if he knew he was going to die. A jury will sift through the facts—the question we want to answer is this: What is God saying through this?)

Everything that happened after this, the looting, the anarchy, the lynching of police officers (horrible stuff!!!) doesn't change the fact that while MOST POLICE ARE GOOD, there are white men (to be clear, they are not all white, as seen in this incident) walking around with guns, mace and tasers, who enjoy violence, are on a power trip and don't like black people...and I can't imagine what that is like for a young black man.

An armed white man had his knee on the neck of a black man for 8 minutes and 46 seconds—a full minute after he was unconscious. None of his colleagues stopped him. And the brave bystanders were ignored—even threatened. If you don't think that's a problem, then you might be part of it.

A few days later, I posted comments from Lawrence Jones, a *conservative black Trump supporting* commentator and the testimony of Senator Tim Scott, *the first black Republican senator*, and also a Trump supporter. I wanted people to understand the fear they live with as black men. Here is an excerpt, slightly edited.

...Lawrence Jones: "I am also a black man, and this could have been me." And then there is Trump supporter, Conservative Republican Senator Tim Scott, talking about being pulled over seven times IN ONE YEAR near the capitol because he is black...He has shared that once as he entered the Capitol, Capitol police stopped him. He showed them his senate pin, and the Capitol Police officer said, "The pin I know. You, I don't. Show me your ID." Do you think that would have happened if he had been white? No.

<https://www.thestate.com/latest-news/article89803792.html/video-embed/amp/kansas>

Now, I am not suggesting that there is a simple solution nor ignoring that the majority of incarcerated people in the US are black and 50% of violent crime is carried out by African Americans: 13% of the population. And I also am not suggesting that police officers have nothing to fear—they do, and we need to be grateful for them as we pray for them. But one problem (crime) does not justify the other (racism/authoritarianism). We need to solve them both. I am suggesting, however, that your average white person (like me), who is not a racist, doesn't fully understand the experience of black America.

I will give you an example. A few years ago, I met with one of the most connected people in the Israeli government. He said to me with disdain, "Messianic Jews are not persecuted. You all just whine a lot and make up stories." How would he know? Had someone bombed his house? Slit his tires? Blown up his building? Or plastered his face all over a neighborhood, warning people that he is a danger to the Jewish people. He had never walked in our shoes as a religious minority in Israel.

And how would we know the experience of African Americans? Listen to Lawrence Jones and Senator Scott. They do know.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILhpB4ahbeE>

<https://video.foxnews.com/v/6161748419001#sp=show-clips>

I took a little bit of abuse for both of those posts. Everybody was giving their political opinion, and, as I said earlier, I made the same mistake. But something was churning on the inside of me. A few days later I was driving to Ashkelon From Tel Aviv with my wife. As we got close, I began to pray and just tell the Lord that I was bothered by some of the responses I had seen. There were so many opinions, but what was God saying?

Then, suddenly, the Lord began to speak to me. He basically said that my problem was that I was giving my opinion when He wanted me to prophesy. He told me what I was experiencing was prophetic and not my opinion. Then He led me to do something that *I don't think I have ever done*, and that was to speak for Him in the first person. When I prophesy, I do not say, "This is what God says." That is the language of Old Testament Prophets. I think people are way too flippant in how they claim to speak for God. But I was confident that this was specifically what He wanted me to do, and this is very rare for me: once in thirty-two years of ministry.

I pulled over and began to write. Now I want to say something and be very clear. Even though I wrote in the first person, there was not an angel sitting next to me dictating what I was writing. Just as I teach it, prophecy is imperfect, unlike the written word of God. Prophecy comes through a human being with emotions, with his own carnal desires, his own godly desires, and so many other things. Sometimes it is hard to discern between the two. So, while I felt like God told me to write in the first person for Him, I don't pretend that every single word is exactly what God wanted me to say. Yet, my spirit bore witness to the Spirit of God concerning what I was writing. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and I submit it to you.

A PROPHETIC WORD FOR AMERICA

Or at least, my sense...

Do not process what is happening in America in a political way. If you do, you will choose a side, right or left; but I am seated in heavenly places, not on the political right or the political left, but in heaven ABOVE.

"Since, then, you have been raised with Messiah, set your hearts on things above, where Messiah is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, NOT ON EARTHLY THINGS. For YOU DIED, and your life is now hidden with Messiah in God." (Colossians 3:1-2)

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." (Isaiah 55:8)

You will say 'but this' and 'but that,' but I am looking for your obedience. What does my word say regarding the poor, hurting and broken? Does it say to choose a political side or to reach out to them? Reaching out in my love is not a right wing or left-wing solution, but an upward resolution that will release my grace and power.

The key to the revival that white believers seek, is for them reach out to the black community with my love, healing power and practical help ... such as listening and serving, and if possible, mentoring and tutoring. I am calling you to share your lives with them.

I will deal with the looters and criminals through the criminal justice system, yet even they have a purpose, just as I used Assyria to judge Israel. (Isaiah. 10:5-6)

In the end, I judged Assyria for her actions.

But I want you to look deeper and bring my healing touch to black America. There is no other answer. Hear my voice: 'THERE IS NO OTHER ANSWER!' Will you be my body? Will you be my hands? My heart breaks for them; does yours?

If you want revival, then you will have to leave your neighborhoods and go to theirs. You will need to share your riches and experience with a people not your own. Are you willing? What is your life to you? You were 'bought with a price.' (1 Corinthians 6:20)

What was the cry of the Hebrew prophets? Look at their hearts. When they entered into the political arena it was to release my Word and speak against injustice. They cried out on behalf of the broken, the orphaned, the fatherless and the widow.

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6)

(The woman caught in adultery, the Good Samaritan, all the untouchables that Yeshua touched: from beggars to lepers to prostitutes.)

You want me to remove the agitators, so you can continue in comfort. Hear me, 'I have not called you to a life of comfort, but of comforting others—and in that you will find true comfort.' The agitators are my servants^{xxiv}, sent to wake you up to the need. If you respond to the need, I will deal with the agitators and send winds of refreshing—the ones you have longed for.

No, this is not the revival 'package' you were looking for, but it is the one I am sending. I need you to be ME to them; not to make excuses why they deserve what they are getting.

Will you rise up? Rise up to that heavenly calling where Yeshua weeps and intercedes (Romans 8:34) for all who are in need. Will you call them to Me, to salvation and freedom?

Where are MY leaders? Where are MY ACTIVISTS, where are my HOLY AGITATORS, anti-looters, who give and don't take, who love and don't hate? I can't do it without you! (Romans 10:14) I do not have a plan B. You are my representatives on earth until I come. Rise up, people of God, and do not miss this

moment. Who will answer the call to love these people?

You fight for biblical values, but I am calling you to live them out. For all your fighting, what has it gotten you? You are losing ground daily. Why? Because you have the cart before the horse.^{xxv}

Is the New Covenant commission to fight for biblical values in the public square? Or to preach the Message of the Gospel that changes lives? 'Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah, the NEW CREATION has come: The old has gone, the new is here!' (1 Corinthians 5:17)

Did Paul my servant preach biblical values to the lost?

"I will not venture to speak of anything except what Messiah has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So, from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I HAVE FULLY PROCLAIMED THE GOSPEL OF MESSIAH. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Messiah was not known.." (Romans 15:18-20)

His Message was Jesus! Preaching biblical values to unbelievers is like driving a car without oil. It will not work. (And it has not worked.)

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is not preaching biblical values to the lost, but this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." (James 1:27)

However, the oil is the Power of My Spirit. When you preach the gospel in BOTH power and love; in word and deed; when you truly represent My heart to a broken world, then you will see fruit. And then they will gladly embrace My values.

END

I added this: "I have a friend in the U.S. He and his wife are very successful with three grown children. About eight years ago, they took in an African American pre-teen. At first it was only visits for mentoring, but then after the death of her mother, and then her caretaker, and being left in a completely dysfunctional inner-city environment, they adopted her. She is now about to graduate high school from a private school, and she knows Jesus. Without

them, I can't even imagine where she would be today!

"No, not everyone has that type of grace, but it is an example of how actions of love speak louder than words. We can't miss this moment."

Sadly, I feel we already have. Even though that word was shared thousands of times, posted on Charisma and GOD TV, it is just too hard for me to believe that people will leave comfort to help the hurting. Some would, but most would not.

However, the next day, I was encouraged to learn that a bunch of on-fire believers from California traveled to the corner where George Floyd was murdered. They were holding daily services and posted pictures of white and black men and women baptizing local people repenting of their sins. I wept and wondered if we would really see a gospel revolution.

I have a friend, Sean Steckbeck, who moved from Israel back to the United States a few years ago. In the midst of the virus, he kissed his wife and children goodbye, got on a plane and went to Los Angeles to share the gospel with black people. Everyday, he was posting testimonies. They immersed in water a young black man whose nickname was *Riot Boy*, given for his behavior on the streets during the George Floyd riots.

In just the past few weeks, I have seen worship leader Sean Feucht taking the gospel through "worship protests" to all the hotspots such as Portland, Seattle and Kenosha! Thousands are gathering in multiracial times of worship and revival. I am so encouraged by this. This is exactly what I saw when I released this prophecy several months ago. This is what God wants!

But it breaks my heart that not much more has taken place. I understand that we are in the middle of a virus and your average American believer is not going to risk his life or that of his family to go out on the streets in the inner city. I get that. Still, we have to remember, and I share this with tears, that our primary sacred responsibility that Yeshua left us with—our most precious Commission—is the *Great Commission*.

God is calling us to step out in faith to a place that is uncomfortable, a place where, in the end, we will find great joy. We have to figure out how to share the love of God with black America. It may start by simply taking your family to eat in their neighborhood or maybe by volunteering with a soup kitchen.

If you are black and reading this, I am certainly not saying that you can only

find black people in certain neighborhoods or in soup kitchens. I'm just thinking out loud of how we can do *something*.

Do you have black friends? Have you asked them what their feelings are on this issue? Have you asked them how you can be part of bringing healing?

Find a congregation or ministry that is getting involved in inner-city outreach and volunteer. Do something, small or great. Every act is like prayer or intercession, pleading to God to pour out His Spirit and bring healing between white and black America.

It would be easy to say, "I thought that happened years ago. There was the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King." There is no question that America has come a long way, even to the point of electing a black president, twice. But often healing comes in waves, and not all at once. The Lord has to keep peeling back the layers in order for us to see the hurt and the pain and to deal with it. No, America is not where it was 200 years ago; but it doesn't mean that there isn't more healing needed.

I sense that this is a judgment or blessing issue. We *have* to get it right.

God bless America.

16.

DON'T LET YOUR LOVE WAX COLD

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold ...” (Matthew 24:12)

Yeshua walks into the Temple courts. He fashions a whip out of some cords and then goes *bal-lis-tic*! The Son of God is turning over tables, yelling at people, “You have turned my Father’s house into a den of thieves!” It is shocking. Why? *Because it is not His normal disposition.* We do not regularly see Him running around with a whip, yelling at people. Normally, He is very even-keeled, saying things such as: “They will know you by your love, one for another.” (John 13:35)

I work with a group of ministers in Tikkun Global. We have been together for 30 plus years. Every now and then, in the midst of years and years of dealing with intense issues (as all preachers can understand) and making the effort to work *together* rather than as individuals (we have a 30-plus year testimony of integrity, accountability, unity and brotherly love), one of us *loses it*! It happens. Ministry is real, not plastic. But when that person momentarily loses their cool, it doesn’t destroy the ministry or the unity of the relationships. In fact, it causes each of us to take notice because we know that this person is not normally given to outbursts. If they were regularly yelling at people, that would be different (and we would correct or remove them). But in this “once in a blue moon” outburst, we take notice to find what is bothering our brother.

Sadly, I have heard more than one believer justify ugly, ungodly behavior by quoting this passage about Yeshua turning over tables. My question is this, how many times did Yeshua do this? When the average person thinks of the nature and character of the biblical Yeshua, what adjectives come to mind? Angry? Miffed? Short-tempered? No! Instead we think loving, caring, and compassionate. Was He ever angry or miffed? Absolutely! But those were rare exceptions. Most of the time—like 99% of the time—He projected the very essence of what we know as love. Yeshua got upset and expressed it on just a

few occasions, which means we are to pay attention and ask ourselves, *what makes Yeshua angry?*

Hypocrisy and fraud in religious leaders get Him upset. Yeshua is rebuking supposed believers. These were people who made their living by serving in the Temple. They were religious workers, like pastors and teachers, if you will. These were individuals tasked with serving the people of Israel, bringing sacrifices to the Temple as the Torah commanded. But they had turned it into a moneymaking scheme by overcharging, just as when you pay four times the amount for food and drink at Disney World because there is nowhere else to go. People would come from far and wide to Jerusalem, but they could not do their Temple service without a sacrifice, and these people were stealing from them.

God's harshest words are always for those "inside the family." Did not Peter write that judgment starts in the house of God? But what was Yeshua's attitude toward the lost and the broken? Love and compassion. But to the religious hypocrites it was, "you are the blind leading the blind."

How does He treat those "sinners" and the worldly people? He went to their parties and befriended them; He made them want what He had. Even when people gossiped about this practice, He chose sinners over religious people.

He rebukes the Pharisees harshly, but says to the sinner on the cross, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) Most of Yeshua's ministry was to these people, the broken and the hurting, like the woman with the issue of blood, to the worldly, like the rich young ruler, to the sinful, like prostitutes such as Mary Magdalene, and to the criminals, like Zacchaeus, the tax collector.

You talkin' to me?

Now, to whom was He talking when He said, "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold."? It seems that it was a *warning to us*, the end-time believers. In the same passage, He talks about many believers falling away: leaving the faith. Then He talks about people being deceived by false prophets and follows with this Scripture about our love growing cold. The Expositor's Bible Commentary agrees:

"There is a certain parallelism between v.10 and vv. 11-12. Those who turn away from the faith are deceived by false prophets, and those who

hate each other do so because wickedness abounds and the love of most grows cold; only those who endure—in love (v.12) and despite persecution (vv.9-11; cf. Rev. 2:10)—will be saved (v.13). They must ‘stand firm to the end;’ individual responsibility persists to the end of one’s life, but corporate responsibility to the final consummation. Thus, part of the effect of this ‘tribulation’ is to purify the body of professed disciples: those who endure are saved.” (cf. Da 11:32, 34-35)

The people He is speaking about in verse 10 are the same ones that He is addressing in verses 11-12. But those of us who stand firm to the end will be saved.

So, again, I want to remind you that our holy, sacred commission is not to expose conspiracies or to constantly express outrage on the Internet over the latest crazy thing that the world has embraced. If we would put as much energy in winning the lost as we do in voicing our indignation at their behavior, we would see less and less of the outrageous behavior and more and more people finding Jesus. I am not saying that we should be silent on social issues, just that it should be proportionate to our efforts to bring people to the Messiah.

Our calling is to win them to Yeshua through the preaching of the Gospel with signs, wonders and anointed, persuasive words. What we see in social media, though, is a *steady stream of anger, arrogance and outrage*. I see love waxing cold and it chills me to the bone. I see angry, self-righteous Christians who can’t seem to remember that they, too, were once outrageous sinners.

Paul was a man moved by love and compassion to reach the lost. One of the reasons he was so effective was because he remembered that he, too, despite being the greatest among the apostles, was just like them, even calling himself, “the worst of sinners.”

We are soul winners, not sin whiners

When the race riots broke out in May, I had a friend who hopped on a plane from Tennessee and went to Los Angeles to share the gospel with black people. He joined up with people out there and saw much fruit. That is the proper response to the racial tensions—to share the love of Yeshua with those who are hurting.

I’ve watched certain believers and how they have reacted to something as

simple as putting on a mask—like it is worse than, say, being told you can’t drink out of a water fountain because you’re black, you can’t ride in the front of the bus with the whites or eat at the same counter with other human beings whose skin is of a lighter complexion. Oh, that we would care about the lost, as much as we do the *mask debate*!

I saw a video of a pastor who is talking about his routine of going several times a day into a well-known donut franchise, and the particular way he orders his coffee there (he might want to lay off the caffeine! ... as you will see). He was indignant that the manager asked him to wear a mask.

“If you call me a liar one more time, I’m going to take these work boots, and I’m going to kick your teeth down your throat’ Yes. I said it. And in the moment I meant it. I said, ‘Sir, listen to me very closely, I will be back at 5 o’clock tonight to get my two medium coffees, seven creams, and five sugars and I will be back tonight and I will not be wearing a mask.’

“I’ll go to jail over this. It is the golden calf. I’m sick of Christians saying things like this: ‘Well, it’s just a mask.’ You know what they used to say? ‘Oh, it’s just a baby, it’s just a zygote, it’s just a growth in the mother’s womb, so let’s kill it.’”

No, wearing a mask is not the same as tolerating the murdering of unborn children. But sadly, many act as if it is. It is not the slippery slope to communism. It doesn’t concern me so much that he said these things. This fellow clearly does not meet the standards for leadership in 1 Timothy 3. But what concerns me deeply is that people cheer him on as if he is being a bold witness for Jesus, when in fact, he is just the opposite! They love his politically incorrect speech, even if it is lewd and ungodly. They ignore the fact that he divorced his wife without cause and married a staff member, but love his fiery rhetoric. He says what they would like to say. He continues ...

“I can tell you one thing: ladies and gentlemen, I wish to the God in heaven that I would have brought my bullhorn, because I’d be standing on the top of this rental truck right now in their parking lot raising Cain for Jesus Christ, preaching the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am so sick of this mask brigade nonsense. Bunch of Nazis.”

This man’s way of getting revenge is preaching the Gospel with a bullhorn and calling others Nazis. (There are few things as offensive to Jewish people

as calling people who are not Nazis, Nazis. Real Nazis committed the mass murder of 6,000,000 Jews—they didn't ask you to wear a mask in a donut shop. Don't devalue the word, *Nazi*!)

This is a pastor with *1.5 million followers* on Facebook. Yeshua cleared out the Temple because people were robbing the poor in the house of God. It was both abusive and blasphemous. Our pastor friend here was asked to wear a mask in order to protect others inside a coffee shop. And he thinks he is Jesus in the Temple.

A woman who is a 'friend' of mine on Facebook was apparently upset that some NBA players decided to strike, using their platform to express their opinion. Answering the question, "Will you miss the NBA?" she publicly wrote, **"Hell no!!! NFL. NBA. CAN GO TO HELL. I hope they go broke. Then all these ingrates can go get a REAL JOB."** This is a professing believer in Jesus. (Why is it we get really excited when a conservative or Republican uses their platform to express their views, like when Tim Tebow took a knee for Jesus—but we are *outraged* when someone with whom we disagree, uses theirs? Suddenly, they are *ingrates*, who need to get "real jobs.") This type of unbridled, demonic hatred coming from professing believers is all over Facebook, and twitter is even worse. It is disgusting. Here is the same "Christian" woman publicly stating what she is going to do the day after Trump is reelected:

"YEAH!!! I can hardly wait to walk in to work with my head up high!! With the look of F. U. back to all the damn liberals I have to wait on and tolerate at work."

She is oozing with Christian charity. Or maybe not. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, *if you love one another.*" (John 13:35) We have spiritual weapons to fight spiritual battles, but we have thrown them aside for carnal, hateful methods. These NBA players need Yeshua, not Christians telling them to go to hell. Jesus has called her to be a testimony to her coworkers, not get political revenge. Friends, *our love is our testimony.* In the last days, people will become hateful. We must guard our hearts. Sadly, it appears that people like this woman have traded in their devotion to Yeshua for a personality cult of politics.

A couple months ago, a young lady (an avid Trump supporter), wrote something about how she wished President Trump would not cuss during speeches. Again, this is a lady whose Facebook photo has her holding a

Trump/Pence sign. I was stunned at the vitriol against her from Christians. They went after her: “How dare she try and censor the president?” There was such a lack of love in their communication.

Many think that Democrats/Biden are the problem; Republicans/Trump are the answer. No! Sin is the problem: the human condition. Yeshua is the answer. The last great revival to come to America was the Brownsville Revival where millions were touched by God, having their relationships with Him revitalized and over 200,000 came to faith or rededicated their life to Yeshua. Amazingly, that happened during the administration of Democrat Bill Clinton. Revival trumps politics when it comes to changing a nation.

Social Media, for Better or for Worse

I love social media! I really do. Our ministry visibility took off because of Facebook (and God, of course!). Before Facebook, we were stuck in Israel (an awesome place to be stuck!) and had little reach to the rest of the world. Last night, I ministered a message on this book to a group of 75 in England. It was great!

But, there is an ugly side. Twitter is the worst. People speak their mind without any restraint and without any filter. I am stunned at times by how so-called believers say some of the ugliest things. About a year ago, the wife of a minister whom I know, basically cursed all *demon*-crats, as she called them, delighting in their eternal damnation. Other believers cheered her on. One was a pastor I know! Meanwhile, Yeshua is asking us to reach Democrats (and Republicans) with the Gospel, not curse them!

A few years back, I wrote a blog called “The Internet Golden Rule: Seven ways to be Gracious Online,” and you can read it here <http://roncan.net/7rules>.

When was the last time you were filled with compassion for a stranger? When was the last time you walked the streets of your city and wept for those who are lost? When was the last time you physically ached over the condition of the lost? If it has been a while, this would be a good time to allow God to touch your heart. The end-time body will be made up of those filled with the Holy Spirit’s compassion. I am rooting for you!

17.

THE TRUMP TRAP

They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. (Acts 12:22)

Patriotism over Zeal for the Lord: RED FLAG!

In the documentary, *Theologians Under Hitler*, one of the interviewees muses that if there were two groups that should have immediately resisted Hitler, it was the church and the university; but, in the beginning, there was nearly no resistance. Do not think that you cannot be deceived. The Antichrist will be a very attractive figure, and many will follow him, *maybe even from the church*.

“For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

It would be convenient if he had horns, tail and a pitchfork, but actually he will be a man of peace. In the words of the great Bob Dylan:

*Could be the Führer
 Could be the local priest
 You know sometimes Satan comes as a man of peace
 He's a great humanitarian, he's a great philanthropist
 He knows just where to touch you, honey, and how you like to be kissed
 He'll put both his arms around you
 You can feel the tender touch of the beast
 You know that sometimes Satan comes as a man of peace.^{xxxvi}*

Spirit of God or Spirit of Politics?

I have been deeply concerned by how many Christian leaders have replaced or combined their zeal for the Gospel with their love of President Trump. Many unbelievers think that evangelical means *right wing, conservative*, as opposed to, someone who loves God, loves the His word and wants everyone to know Yeshua/be born-again.

I have had several moments where I felt the Lord speak to my spirit about something political. I had a strong assurance that I was hearing His heart. But then I turn on the news, I watch the back and forth arguments, talk radio, Facebook opinions, and then I come to a different conclusion. There is a clear difference between the council of the Lord and the council of talk radio. I am not speaking only about right and wrong, but the spirit behind “right” can sometimes be wrong. As one of my professors used to say, “It is not enough to say what Jesus said, but you have to say it like He said it.”

Remember, there were two sides to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The good side led to death, just as much as the evil side. Only the tree of life could make you immortal. The life of God is beyond the knowledge of good and evil. Being “right” without God can lead to pride, racism, hatred, callousness and self-righteousness. And many believers, I fear, have entered into this spirit and confuse it with the Spirit of God.

Please do not be offended and hear me out. I voted for President Trump and will vote for him again (if you are reading this before Election Day 2020). I am politically conservative, and I have to say I’ve been very pleased with President Trump’s policies, particularly regarding Israel and the unborn. His handling of the economy pre-COVID-19 brought the U.S. out of the slowest post-recession growth in U.S. in history. This past summer, he has brokered peace deals between Israel and several of her Arab neighbors. Here is what I wrote about that:

“Here is what no one saw coming. President Trump turned the peace process upside down. By brokering peace between Israel and Arab states *before* the Palestinians, all the pressure is now on the Palestinians (and Iran) to come to the table. WOW.

“Biden and Obama moved toward Iran. Under Biden/Obama the world became less safe. ISIS was born, and not taken seriously. Benghazi and Syrian genocide. Under Biden and Obama, the U.S. relationship with Israel was the worst in Israel’s history. Obama was hostile against Israel. He arrogantly thought he could make peace and all he did was make it worse. His foreign policy, that Biden will continue, was very weak for a world power.

“President Trump has pressured Iran and made peace with Iran’s enemies. Biden has already said he would go back to renew agreement with oppressive Iran (who called regularly for Israel’s destruction).

“There is a lot about President Trump that bothers me in regard to his character. But as far as policy, he has been brilliant.”

He is without a doubt the most pro-Christian, pro-Evangelical, pro-Israel president in my lifetime and, maybe, ever. At the same time, he often displays extremely *unchristian* characteristics. He is not a Christian by any of the standards that the Bible gives us to measure. And yes friends, we are supposed to measure. Not only are we supposed to measure, but that is how we know that someone is a believer—the fruit of a Messianic or Christian life, the witness of our spirit and the evidence that the person has a love relationship with Yeshua. This is how pastors protect the flock.

President Trump does not seem to have Christian fruit in his life. He has never (that I know of) publicly confessed his sins and professed faith in the salvific death and resurrection of Yeshua. He lies constantly—even about things that are inconsequential. He attacks his enemies (as well as those who merely disagree with him) with an aggressive anger and vengeance that could never be described as ‘meek’. As believers, we are called to love them, pray for them, and, even turn the other cheek.

After not being willing to name his favorite verse from his “favorite book,” the Bible^{xxvii}, he decided two months later that it was “an eye for an eye,” one of the few verses that Yeshua actually moved us away from and upgraded to “love your enemies.” He has a foul mouth and says the most inappropriate things.

He is not a baby Christian as people continue, *after five years*, to say. I remember what it is like to be a baby believer. You are in love with Yeshua! You can’t help but tell others! You have been born again into a new, spiritual world! Most baby believers are bouncing off the walls with excitement, but after a year or two, you are no longer drinking milk. Yet, to this day, five years since candidate Trump began to court evangelicals, people are still making excuses for his non-Christian behavior.

Now, let me be clear—a good president doesn’t necessarily need to be a born again believer. That is not my point. My deep concern is the level of adoration with which many believers relate to him. The former mantra, *I don’t need a pastor but a president*, has no meaning when you treat him like he is angelic. No, he is just a politician.

Prayer leader Jonathan Boegl wrote,

“One of the most alarming differences between our evangelical family’s attitude toward Trump in 2016 and 2020 is that in 2016 we viewed him as an ‘evil’ with benefits. In 2020, this man has become our chief arbiter of truth; the one who determines our evangelical family’s narrative for any given national issue or problem ... Don’t believe this? Tell me something we evangelicals disagree with him about. Show me where and how we’ve communicated our disagreement.

“I believe this incremental drift over these last four years has become a real form of idolatry, and is one of the most destructive things that’s happened to American Biblical Christianity in my lifetime.”

It was one thing when people were saying, “God used a donkey; He can use Trump.” But now many speak of him with deep reverence, despite no actual change in his character. A well-known apostolic leader shared with me about hearing a recording of a pastor with the president. He was stunned at the level of over-the-top flattery and adoration. My friend was deeply disturbed.

It is also worth noting that the first evangelical leader to boldly support President Trump was Jerry Falwell, Jr. Students at Liberty were shocked that he would embrace someone with such an un-Christian lifestyle. Falwell was one of first to say we are electing a president, not a pastor. Okay...but it turns out that Falwell was a lot more like Trump than we ever imagined—allegedly engaging, with his wife, in illicit sexual practices, amongst other several accusations. It is even being reported that Falwell used Trump fixer Michael Cohen to prevent revealing photos of his wife from going public. My point: he was the first *Christian* leader to support Trump (and it turns out he may have been more like Trump than a Christian leader!).

Now, I understand the attraction to the President. After years of being spoken down to by a politically correct upper class, it felt good to have someone who simply didn’t care, tell the truth about so many issues that are important to conservatives—from pro-life to Islamic radicalism. It was refreshing. We had been told that we were racists and bigots and here comes someone who said what we all wanted to say, in a politically incorrect way. *It was validating.*

When he gave his first speech, after coming down the escalator at Trump Tower, I was smiling to hear someone finally speak the truth (sans the “Mexico is sending their rapists” comment). I said to my wife, “He could win.”

Have you ever considered that maybe the anti-Christ *will* be attractive to believers? **I am not saying that President Trump is the Antichrist.** I am absolutely not saying that! Are we clear? I *am* saying is this: Jesus said be careful that no one deceives you. What does that mean? *THAT YOU CAN BE DECEIVED!* Particularly when you exchange your love for the word of God for political, red meat rallies.

When you spend more time concerned about the upcoming election than the Second Coming, you should take a step back. When you put all your hope in a man, to the point that a famous Christian magazine had the headline on a recent article that said, “*Why a Trump win is critical to the Survival of Christian Faith and Values*,”—you might have problem. Forgive me, but somehow I don’t think that God in Heaven is biting His nails, hoping and praying (to Himself, I guess) for a Trump win so that Christianity, which has survived Nero and Hitler (a lot worse than Biden), doesn’t disappear.

We make excuses for President Trump that we would never let slide in our congregations. Imagine if someone your church wrote that they were the, “second coming of God.” He would need to be confronted by the elders. But Trump retweeted this quote from right-wing conspiracy theorist Wayne Allen Root:

“President Trump is the greatest President for Jews and for Israel in the history of the world, not just America, he is the best President for Israel in the history of the world ... and the Jewish people in Israel love him like he’s the King of Israel. They love him like he is the second coming of God ... But American Jews don’t know him or like him. They don’t even know what they’re doing or saying anymore. It makes no sense! But that’s OK, if he keeps doing what he’s doing, he’s good for.”

How is that not alarming to any Bible-believer? Herod was killed by God for not giving Him glory. But there was hardly a peep from evangelical leaders. Someone named ‘Doug’ on Twitter asked, “Ok. I need a Christian brother or sister to explain to me how this isn’t blasphemy ...” In case you are wondering if someone convinced the president to delete it—*it is still on Twitter!*

Amazingly, someone posted online (about this tweet) the typical Trump excuse, that he was a new believer and it was at the beginning of his presidency. First, I don’t know that President Trump identifies as a born-again believer (nearly as much as we claim he is) and, *actually, it was exactly one year*

ago in August 2019! But as Trump himself claimed, he could “stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody,” and not “lose any voters.” I am not sure I agree with that, but I can tell you this confidently: there would be a lot of Christians justifying him and still supporting him.

Again, if you see him as a politician, fine. If you think he is a godsend to America, great. *I believe that.* But if you think that there is some inherent, holy virtue, as opposed to God using an unbeliever, as He has done many times in history (Churchill, for one, Netanyahu for two, and let’s not forget Cyrus, to whom many, including me, have compared the president), then be warned that you are on dangerous ground. Judge President Trump as a Christian by the fruit of the Holy Spirit (or lack thereof) in his life, *just like we would anyone else.* Vote for him. Don’t worship him. Pray for him. Don’t make excuses for him.

No matter who wins in November, keep your eyes on Yeshua. Vote for politicians that represent your values, but do not exalt them above the Savior, particularly when they look nothing like Him. As my friend Dr. Michael Brown used to say, “The problem with deception is that it is so deceiving!” People who are deceived *do not know they are deceived!* That is why it is called deception.

I have seen several believers post sentiments like, “I am voting for Donald Trump and I don’t care what you think.” I do care what people think—*especially my unbelieving friends.* I have preached morality to them for 37 years. They heard me say that Bill Clinton was not fit for office because of his multiple sexual indiscretions. And, yet, now I am voting for a man who, very much like Clinton, has a long history of pushing himself on women (by his own admission) and cheating on all of his three wives. Yes, I owe them an explanation beyond, *“I don’t care what you think.”*

False Healing

We are the ones with the moral high ground of Scripture, but because Donald Trump loves us and defends us, we feel good. We feel like finally someone understands us. *But that is a false healing.* During all this time that we, as believers, have been mocked and belittled as archaic, racist, etc., *Yeshua* has loved us. We find our strength and identity, not in a flawed politician who lives a very un-Christian life, but in the person of Jesus, who gave Himself for us. We look like hypocrites when we give our undying devotion to any politician.

That is a personality cult. It is the root that is my concern; it should be enough for us to find our identity in the unseen Yeshua. We don't need anyone else to defend us, and particularly not someone who lives his life in contradiction to the values of Jesus.

In Acts 5, the apostles received support from an unlikely source: The great Gamaliel. He convinced the Sanhedrin to calm down regarding the activities of the believers. He made it clear—

“Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.” (Acts 5:38-39)

Did the believers give him an award for being Pro-Messianic? Did they invite him as a keynote speaker to their next conference? I am sure they were grateful, but if they ever had an audience with him, it would be to win him to Messiah, not to set up shrines in his honor. We actually never hear from him again in the New Testament, but his grandson became one of the greatest persecutors of Messianic Jews, forcing them out of the synagogues after the destruction of the Temple (read here for more: www.roncan.net/1stCent).

If we find our identity in an unbeliever's anger against our common “enemy”, the result will not be the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The adage, “The enemy of my enemy is my friend,” is not from the Bible. Our attitude toward the Hollywood elites and left-wing leaders should be deep compassion and intercession for their souls. I don't care that they look down on me or mock me. I know who I am in Yeshua and want to bring that salvation to them!

If we hate them, as Trump seems to hate them, we have followed the wrong Messiah. We are not at war with Hollywood—we want to win Hollywood! I don't hate the left; I want to see Yeshua take hold of the left. Our war is not against flesh and blood, but against the enemy of their souls.

When we allow hatred in our hearts against those who disagree with us, we cease to be the salt and light that God has called us to be. Trump, for all the good he has done politically, has created an “*us versus them*” environment. His greatest weakness is that *he loves the fight*. A godly leader knows when to fight and when to heal. Unity doesn't turn him on. He turns most issues from George Floyd to Charlottesville into an “*us versus them*” fight. Jesus taught *us* to love *them*.

I am not a never-Trumper and actually really like him at times (Although the debate was a low-point.) I like lots of unbelievers and want to win them. He is funny and has made some great policy decisions. I have listened to several of his stump speeches this week, and that is where he shines—as a politician. My concern is with believers who have compromised their prophetic edge to justify *any* behavior from him. When we fail to confront sin in leaders, because they defend us or like us, we have compromised. Regarding Bill Clinton, we cried out, “Character counts!” With President Trump, we wink and smile and make excuses for him. Vote for him; don’t worship him.

My Prophetic Sense

Having said that, I do feel a deep warning in my spirit. One Sunday morning in September, I was driving to Jerusalem when I seemed to get a heavenly download. If Donald Trump loses the next election, it will not be because Joe Biden ran a better campaign. Let’s face it—the man is terrified to leave his house. It will not be because people reject the policies of President Trump. It will be God’s judgment on the church (judgment begins in the house of God!) for allowing Trump to affect them, rather than God in *them* affecting Trump.

Over the past four years, I have not seen the President become godlier; but I have seen Christians become more abrasive in their communications. God gave President Trump to America as a reprieve, but His hope was that all the evangelicals around him would have a deeper impact on Trump. The Falwell tragedy is a prophetic picture of how we have become more like him, rather than he more like us. Instead of Trump becoming godly (or godlier) in his communications, many believers have become ungodly in how they speak. We sound more like him, when the plan was that he would sound more like us. Many believers feel that Trump’s politically incorrect speech has set them free, when Jesus already did that 2,000 years ago.

Despite having not grown significantly in character, Christians adore him. Some see him like an angel sent from heaven. Dare I say, some replace the fellowship of the believers for political discourse? Trump has become a golden calf to some. They bow down and say, “These are our gods who saved America.” and God does not take to sharing His glory very well.

Sleeping with your Stepmother!

Surely you know the strange story of 1 Corinthians 5. It seems better fit for a

tabloid magazine than the Bible. Read it.

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? (1 Corinthians 5:1-6)

So, we don't know if this is his stepmother or if the father had more than one wife, but this man was having an open affair with her. This is where the church takes a stand, but not only would they not discipline or "pass judgment" on him; in Paul's words, they are proud to have such a person in their midst, most likely because it testifies to their tolerance of such sinners.

I have always struggled with this verse, like, "What were they thinking! How could they be proud of such gross immorality?" But then again, unlike us, they did not have access to the New Covenant Scriptures. Hence, Paul writes them the New Covenant letter.

I see a parallel with President Trump. Nothing he does bothers many believers. In fact, sometimes we glory in his outrageous behavior and often make excuses for him. I shared in another chapter about a Christian Trump supporter being berated by other believers for merely suggesting that Trump should not use vulgar language at rallies.

My point is that despite having more character flaws than any president in my lifetime, the Church is largely silent. And worse, like the Corinthians with the immoral brother, we often wink at his outrageous comments because they can tend to be funny. Or we just say, "But look at all the good he does." We make excuses: "It is just Trump being Trump." "You don't understand him—he is just tweaking the media." "He is a street fighter." There is some truth to those comments. If he changed his personality 100%, he would not be effective—just don't pretend that this is godly behavior. Holding up a Bible for a photo

op *is the exact opposite* of the principles of humility detailed in the Bible he was holding: Far better to be a doer of the word, than a mere “holder”.

Let me be clear—I am voting for Trump. His platform is excellent. He is pro-life. He not only stands with Israel but also, recently, has had more victories with Israel’s enemies than any other president before him. He seems to understand the economy. I want conservative Supreme Court justices. Please don’t take away from this that I am anti-Trump. I have no problem with Trump. As Falwell, Jr. said, “*He is my president, not my pastor.*”

My deep concern is for believers and how they have idolized him as if he is a spiritual leader, not merely a political one. If we do not repent of this idolization, we may find ourselves with President Biden next year. Christian leaders need to repent for being silent on the President’s behavior. It has undercut our testimony to the lost. God does not share His glory. Not with anyone. Ask Herod who did not give glory to God. (Acts 12)

But God raised him up, you may respond. Yes, for God’s purposes. God has used many ungodly people in Scripture. Jehu killed Jezebel, but then God judged Jehu for going too far (Hosea 1:4). God used Assyria, as we said earlier, to judge Israel, but Sennacherib got proud and God judged Assyria.

I believe that God did raise President Trump up and that the Cyrus analogy is valid. But we need to stop excusing immoral behavior and idolizing him, lest judgment come upon us—in the form of Biden/Harris.

18.

ISRAEL WILL BE THE NEW ABORTION

*“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”
(Matthew 25:40)*

Could you vote for a pro-choice candidate over a pro-life candidate? I could not. The killing of children in the womb is the greatest and largest conspiracy to commit genocide in world history. According to the Life Institute, 1.5 billion babies have been murdered in the womb in the last 50 years. If 24% of the world is over 50, then in the last 50 years, nearly one out of every 4 pregnancies ended in abortion—death!

I believe that where you stand on Israel will be as divisive an issue between true believers and the antichrist system in the last days as abortion is today. Zechariah speaks of Israel, or Jerusalem, to be precise, as being a stumbling block to the nations.

“I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.” (Zechariah 12:2-3)

God will be angry at those who oppose her. The imagery is of the nations becoming drunk or sent into confusion—*reeling*. And then having a hernia or severe back injury, for those who come against her. Most believe this is referring to the final battle we see in chapter 14. But then it get personal in Matthew 25.

Sheep and Goats and the Jewish people

The clearest prophetic view into Yeshua's future activities in the days following His hostile takeover of Planet Earth can be found in Matthew 25; what some people *erroneously* call "The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats." It is not a parable, but a *prophecy*.

When: When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him.

Where: He will sit on His glorious throne—which will be in Jerusalem, as that is to where he returns. (Zechariah 14:3)

Who's invited: The survivors from the nations.

In the Old Covenant, when the Bible uses the word "nations" (*ethnos* in Greek, and *goyim* in Hebrew), it *excludes* Israel. So, when God refers to the "nations" it means all the nations besides His nation, Israel. See Psalm 2: "Why do the *nations* rage?" They rage over Israel. So clearly Israel is not one of the nations who are raging. Why is this important? You will see in a minute.

Remember, Yeshua has come back in answer to the cries of His people (just like when God sent Moses). Israel has been attacked by *the nations*: "I will gather *all the nations to Jerusalem* to fight against it." (Zechariah 14:2) When the Greek New Testament quotes the Hebrew Old Testament, such as with Matthew 4:15 quoting Isaiah 9:1, "The land of Zebulun, and the land of Nephthali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the *Gentiles*," it shows that the Hebrew word for non-Jewish nations (Gentiles) is *ethnos* in the Greek. My point: *the nations that are gathered as sheep and goats do not include Israel*. Why? Israel has just experienced national salvation and conversion to life in Yeshua, as it says in Romans 11:26: "all Israel shall be saved."

Yeshua has just returned in answer to the cries of Israelis to defend her. "Then the Lord will go out and fight *against those nations*, as he fights on a day of battle." He wins, obviously. Then in Zechariah 14:16, the prophet speaks of the "survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem." They must come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. So, the survivors that attack the Jewish nation, that now come to Jerusalem, would be from the *other nations*. It would seem that this is the same gathering of which Yeshua speaks in Matthew 25.

So, let's set the scene:

1. Jerusalem is attacked. (Zechariah 14:1-2)
2. The Jews cry out (Zechariah 12:10, Matthew 23:39)
3. Yeshua responds and comes to battle (Zechariah 14:3-4, Revelation 19:11ff)
4. He takes over as King of Jerusalem, the new world capital (Zechariah 14:9), vanquishing the false messiah, that God calls the beast (Revelation 19:20)
5. On the Feast of Tabernacles, He demands that the nations come to Jerusalem to worship Him (Zechariah 14:16) It could be simply delegations of people, as Jerusalem can't fit that many people ...or God has some other supernatural plan: I will leave that to Him!
6. The Jewish survivors, who have now confessed Yeshua as Lord (Romans 11:26, Zechariah 12:10, 13:1), are present and so are the nations.
7. Next, the nations are judged.

Now, this is where most people get this wrong. They have turned this prophecy about Israel and the nations into a sweet story about helping the misfortunate among us. Please don't get me wrong; a large part of what we do in our ministry is helping the poor and hurting. There is a biblical case that can easily be made that helping the hurting and providing for the poor is the mandate of the body of believers. However, that is not the meaning of *this* passage.

He separates the people like sheep and goats. I have heard many teachers speak of sheep nations and the goat nations. But that is not what Yeshua said. Yes, He does gather the nations, but then it says He separates the people, *individually*—not the nations. It is interesting that sheep and goats in Israel would often graze together during the day, but at night the shepherds (Yeshua) would separate them because the goats required a *warmer* place of shelter. I won't go so far with the analogy between *warmer* and eternal punishment but it does speak to the end of the age, nighttime, when sheep and goats will be separated.

He separated individuals from the nations to the right and to the left. The right hand is always considered to be the place of greater honor than the left. This is why Joseph was confused when his father, Jacob, put his right hand on the second born, Ephraim, and not the first born, Manasseh. Jacob explains that Ephraim would be greater. Moses placed blood on the right ears, thumbs and toes of the priest.

Next, Yeshua tells the righteous that they are blessed because of the good works they did to the least of Yeshua's brothers. One commentary, ignoring the context completely, said this is about Christians blessing weaker Christians—the brothers of Yeshua. Again, I remind you,

- They are in Jerusalem
- The nations have attacked Israel
- Yeshua fights against them and now He is judging them based on how they treated the least of His brothers.
- Everyone standing before Yeshua is an unbeliever. The believers have already received their glorified bodies and will rule and reign with Him.

Joseph saved the whole world, but it was to his brothers that he revealed himself in the end. Yeshua is enjoying sweet fellowship at this moment with Jewish people who finally, in the last minutes, recognized Him as Messiah, crying out, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matthew 23:39) Now, He asks the people of each nation, *how did you treat my brothers?*

"Did you embrace the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement, that sought to destroy Israel economically? Did you embrace anti-Semitic conspiracy theories?" Just the other day, the Republican National Convention had to scrap one of their speakers, only hours before she was to share. Mary Ann Mendoza was speaking because a drunk-driving illegal immigrant killed her son. On the very day she was to speak, she retweeted crazy conspiracies theories about Jews and retweeted an endorsement of one of the most demonic and destructive pieces of literary garbage ever to be written, that blames all the world's woes on the Jews, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The book is quite popular in Muslim majority countries and even in Europe.

You name a problem, and I can find you a few million in the Muslim world that will *prove it was the Jews*.

“The Jews’ responsibility for every evil on earth is, rather, a very common, academic, and centrist world view in Arab nations.”^{xxviii}

September 11th was the Jews or the Mossad. The Jews are behind ISIS. And certainly, we created the coronavirus. It would not be the first time Abraham’s kids were accused of intentionally making others ill. In the Middle Ages, as many Europeans died of the plague, which was called the Black Death, Jews were scapegoated and accused without any proof of poisoning the water wells, unleashing the plague.

“Similarly, in recent decades, Israelis have been malevolently accused by the Egyptian media of poisoning Israeli fruits and vegetables exported to Egypt. In 2007, panic ensued in Saudi Arabia caused, by a rumor that Israel had smuggled AIDS-infected melons into the country via a secret “ground corridor.” The Saudi government had to go public to explain that this virus cannot be transferred to people via fruit. At the height of the avian flu scare in 2006, the official Syrian state daily, al-Thawra, wrote that Israel had intentionally developed the virus in order to harm its Arab neighbors.”^{xxix}

Jews have been accused of kidnapping Christian’s children (or Arab or Palestinian depending on where you are spreading the libel) and ritually draining their blood for the use in making Matzah for Passover. Getting back to 9/11, many in the Islamic world do not believe that Osama Bin Laden carried out the attacks, but rather the Jews did it, of course.

Not only were Jews blamed for the Great Depression, but the more recent 2008, Great Recession. There is no global woe that has not been blamed on the Jews. The Media is anti-Israel, but somehow the Jews control the media? The Jews control the banks, but many of the 200,000 Holocaust survivors in Israel have almost nothing.

Much of this goes back to the early church fathers, who blamed the Jews for killing Yeshua. Forget the fact that Yeshua said, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.” (John 10:18); and that God, through Paul, urged the gentile-Christian world to love Israel (Romans 9, 11). The hatred that these Church fathers had for the Jews was palpable and aggressive and led to the deaths of millions of Jews.

They ignored the writings of the apostle to the nations, and instead created a

narrative that was still being used by the Nazis who said, “You killed Jesus, we will kill you.”

“His Blood be upon us!”—Okay

They took the words of the Jews who handed over Yeshua to use as justification for murder. At the time, a few Jews that had been rounded up, cried out, “His blood is on us and on our children!” The crowds were stirred by the chief priests and the elders. At the time, there were well over 1,000,000 Jews living in Israel. This small group could not speak for the whole—but if so, maybe it was prophetic?

God tricked Caiaphas into prophesying Yeshua’s mission:

“Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, ‘You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.’

“He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.” (John 11:49-52)

There is a principle that before God does anything in the affairs of man, He has someone prophetically speak it. I could give you dozens, if not hundreds, of examples from Scripture. I prefer to believe that when the crowd said, “His blood is on us and on our children!” God had ‘tricked’ them into prophesying that the blood of Yeshua covering the sins of a future Israel would embrace Him.

19.

WILL YOU STAND WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. (Romans 11:25-26)

In 2012 in Boston, as a Catholic School played a Jewish school in basketball, the Catholic fans chanted, “You killed Jesus! You killed Jesus!” This is what Jews were told often during the Holocaust. This was justification for murder. The theology, “*You killed God* (deicide), thus we must kill you,” goes back to the second, third and fourth centuries.

“Jews are a perverse people, accursed by God *forever*.” —Hilary of Poitiers (CE 291 – 371)

“The Jews are a brood of vipers, haters of goodness.” —Gregory of Nicia (died CE 394)

“[Jews] are serpents, wearing the image of Judas, their psalms and prayers are the braying of Donkeys.” —St. Jerome (CE 347 – 407)
Note: St. Jerome seems to have forgotten that the other 11 disciples were also Jews who spread the Gospel to the nations so that he could partake in it.

This next quote comes from John Chrysostom, the man they called the Golden-mouthed, so passionate were his sermons. Twenty-five years ago, in my Church History class, the textbook presented him as a deeply godly man. You be the judge...

“The synagogue is worse than a brothel...it is the den of scoundrels and the repair of wild beasts...the temple of demons devoted to idolatrous cults...the refuge of brigands and debauchees, and the

cavern of devils. It is a criminal assembly of Jews...**a place of meeting for the assassins of Christ...**a house worse than a drinking shop...a den of thieves, a house of ill fame, a dwelling of iniquity, the refuge of devils, a gulf and an abyss of perdition...I would say the same things about their souls... **As for me, I hate the synagogue...I hate the Jews for the same reason.**” —John Chrysostom (CE 344 – 407)^{xxx}

Prominent replacement theology proponent, Dr. Gary Burge, presents Augustine as someone who saw a place for the Jewish people: “Augustine believed that the Jews continued to have a valid role in history, only since they were a witness to the Scriptures which foretold Christ.”

And what is that “valid role”? Get ready ...

In reality, Augustine, in his “Sermon against the Jews,” seeks to answer a deeply troubling question: *If God has cursed the Jews, why are they still here?* Could it be that God has not cursed Israel and that their perseverance as a people is due to His covenant with them? (Jeremiah 31:35-37) Does God foresee, along with Paul (Romans 11:26), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36:24ff) and Zechariah (Zechariah 12:10, 13:9), a future Jewish revival? **No, says Augustine, they are merely left here to see the Church’s triumph over the synagogue:**

“Jews deserved death but were destined to wander the earth to witness the victory of the Church over the synagogue.”^{xxxi}

The apple had not fallen far from the tree. Augustine’s spiritual father believed:

The Jews are the most worthless of all men. They are lecherous, greedy, and rapacious. They are perfidious murderers of Christ. They worship the Devil. Their religion is a sickness. The Jews are the odious assassins of Christ, and for killing God there is no expiation possible, no indulgence or pardon. Christians may never cease vengeance, and the Jew must live in servitude forever. God always hated the Jews. It is essential that all Christians hate them. —St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan CE 340 – 397^{xxxii}

Punitive Supersessionism

The dominant form of replacement theology in the early Roman church was

punitive—the Jews need to be punished for their sin of deicide. This is called *Punitive Supersessionism*. The Jews have not only been replaced, *but they must be punished*. The great reformers, John Calvin and Martin Luther, agreed. Calvin said,

[The Jews'] rotten and unbending stiffneckedness deserves that they be oppressed unendingly and without measure or end, and that they die in their misery without the pity of anyone.^{xxxiii}

Luther was even more vicious, though in his early years, sought to win Jewish people. He came up with what became known *Martin Luther's Seven-Point Plan*.

1. Their synagogues and schools should be burned.
2. Their houses should be destroyed.
3. Their Talmudic writings should be confiscated. "...prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, [should] be taken from them."^{xxxiv}
4. Their Rabbis should be forbidden to teach, "on pain of loss of life and limb."^{xxxv}
5. Their money should be taken from them.
6. Jews should be compelled into forced labor.
7. Jews should not be allowed on the streets.

Hitler was fond of Luther's writings. Some think He may have been inspired by Luther's seven points listed above, which are articulated in the demonically inspired titled book, "The Jews and their Lies." Did not Hitler enforce all of them? Of course, he added an 8th, the Final Solution, to gas to death every Jew in Europe (11,000,000!), and then burn their bodies in a crematorium. Is it not surprising that the mass-murdering Hitler called the Father of Reformation a German prodigy for seeing, "the Jew as we today are starting to see him"?^{xxxvi}

N. H. Baynes, professor of Byzantine history (University of London), stated just before the war ended, "If we wish to find a scapegoat on whose shoulders we may lay the miseries which Germany has brought

upon the world—not, perhaps a very scientific way of writing history—I am more and more convinced that the worst evil genius of that country is not Hitler or Bismarck or Frederick the Great, but Martin Luther.”

Hitler himself heaped praise on his German ancestor,

“In 1924 at a Christian gathering in Berlin, Adolf Hitler, a professed Christian, stood before thousands of Christians, and with a standing ovation said:

“I believe that today I am acting in accordance with the will of Almighty God. As I announce the most important work that Christians could undertake and that is to be against the Jews and get rid of them once and for all. We are doing the work of the Lord and let’s get on with it.

“Martin Luther has been the greatest encouragement of my life. Luther was a great man. He was a giant. Within one blow he heralded the coming of the new dawn and the new age. He saw clearly that the Jews need to be destroyed and we’re only beginning to see that we need to carry this work on.”^{xxxvii}

The persecution and hatred of the Jewish people began in Egypt and continues today. The Lord will judge this hatred without cause on the day when His feet stand in Jerusalem and He calls the world to account. What is so sick and twisted about this persecution is that it often comes from those who were the beneficiaries of Israel’s existence—from those who found salvation in the Jew, Yeshua.

Sadly, it continues today. Some of the leaders in the mass women’s movement that marched after Trump’s 2016 victory were blatantly anti-Semitic. Women’s March co-chairs Tamika Mallory and Carmen Perez “asserted that Jewish people bore a special *collective responsibility* as exploiters of black and brown people.” Tamika Mallory has been linked to notorious anti-Semite and Nation of Islam founder Louis Farrakhan.

Palestinian-born Linda Sarsour was recruited to the Women’s March leadership, but had to step down because of her anti-Semitism and alleged ties to Farrakhan. A few months later, she said Israel “is built on the idea that Jews are supreme to everyone else.” Until just a week ago, she was very much

supported by the Democratic Party. But they disavowed her after she told a group of Muslims at the Democratic convention that the Democratic Party, “is absolutely our *party* in this moment.”

(P.S. Then, the Democrats, secretly and off the record, apologized to her for disavowing her, revealing that it was just politics and they do, in fact, embrace the influential anti-Semite.)

Black Lives Matter is a mantra that I embrace. The ancestors of African Americans were taken from their homeland and forced into slavery. They have suffered hundreds of years of awful discrimination. And, yes, their lives matter!

However, the *organization* (and most people who embrace the mantra have no idea what the actual organizations stands for) is openly anti-Israel. In their 40,000-word manifesto they accused Israel of genocide and called Israel an apartheid state. They, along with the BDS movement, called for the “total academic, cultural, and economic boycott of [Israel].”

Let me state for the record, that if Israel is seeking to carry out genocide against Palestinians then, despite having the most powerful weaponry in the Middle East, we are not really good at genocide, as millions of Palestinians live within Israel’s grasp, not to mention the 1.5 million Arabs who *happily* hold Israeli citizenship. Every night around 7:00 PM, I ride my bike to the beach at Jaffa, often stopping there to take a few photos of the setting sun and breathe in the salty air. You know who else is there? A ton of Arabs, as Jaffa is an *Arab town*. They are some of the happiest Arabs you will find in the entire Middle East, and we get along just fine.

I could not find any criticism in the BLM manifesto for China, which has murdered countless Christians over the years and massacred as many as 10,000 activists for democracy in Tiananmen Square and is clamping down on Hong Kong and would love to take over Taiwan. And hardly anyone knows, or cares, sadly, for the Uyghurs, a Muslim ethnic group in northwest China—they’re put in concentration camps, have abortions and sterilizations forced on their women. There’s a real genocide going on against them at this moment by the Communist regime.

And how about Russia? Not too long ago they just took Crimea from Ukraine and Putin seems willing to kill anyone that would oppose him. Not much in there, as far as I know, about Marxist Venezuela or Cuba, where

people are oppressed. (In fact, they probably hold Cuba as an example of equality.) They don't seem to mind the harsh and oppressive reign of terror that the Ayatollahs have over Iran, imprisoning those who express disagreement with them, often being sentenced to harsh prison sentences.

It is illogical that all these movements single out Israel when there are so many actual ruthless regimes on earth. Could it be spiritual? Could it be that Satan hates the tiny Jewish nation because he knows that God has favored her? He knows that the last great battle will be over Jerusalem and he is the greatest anti-Semite of all. And the enemy is aware that Jerusalem is front and center in God's end-time masterplan. Israel is a blip on a map, but she has attracted the ire of every far left and far right movement on earth.

Wolves Dressed in Wool

Satan has found worthy messengers posing as ministers of the gospel. Rick Wiles of Tru News, (which thankfully is permanently banned from YouTube) is not your typical KKK, sheet-wearing, cross-burning bigot. Wiles is the senior pastor of an evangelical church. He has a large following and wields influence via the Internet to his evangelical audience.

“The power of the Israeli lobby in America is the most detrimental force in America. Our culture has been decimated through abortion; pornography; the sexual liberation movement; filthy, raunchy movies [and] television shows; vile, violent rap music and hip-hop, and all of it owned by the synagogue of Satan. I cannot be a preacher of the gospel and not confront the synagogue of Satan, even if it costs me my life. A day is coming [when] Christians are going to lose their lives as they confront the synagogue of Satan. You cannot stand for Jesus Christ and righteousness in this world without confronting the synagogue of Satan.

“You have been taken over by a Jewish cabal ... The church of Jesus Christ, you're next. Get it through your head! They're coming for you. There will be a purge. That's the next thing that happens when Jews take over a country: they kill millions of Christians.”^{xxxix}

I heard Wiles explain not long ago that Israelis don't even speak Hebrew—he called it a made-up language. As a fluent Hebrew speaker, I can verify that it is the language of the Bible, with a few modern additions.

Wiles has said that Jews seek to obtain control of countries to kill millions of Christians, and has described Jews as “deceivers” who “plot, they lie, they do whatever they have to do to accomplish their political agenda.”^{xl}

Texe Marrs, evangelical author and radio host, says this:

“The Jews are on the fast track to their occult fate. They have made an agreement with hell, a covenant with death, and payments on their debt to Satan must be made in accordance with that contractual agreement ... The ultimate goal of the Jews is the annihilation of almost every Gentile man, woman, and child and the establishment of a satanic, Jewish-led global dictatorship (the Jewish Utopia) encompassing the planet. This goal is expressed by the Jews in their most sacred books, the Babylonian Talmud and the Kabbalah.”

Yet, God speaks of a glorious ending for the Jewish people (after judgment). He says that they are beloved (Romans 11:28) and there is much value in being Jewish (Romans 3:1-4). Paul has a deep love for Israel (Romans 9:1-5) and urges Gentile believers to reach out to them (Romans 11:11). He goes to the synagogue in every town to reach his own people, and writes, “I take pride in my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.” (Romans 11:13b-14) Yet, this arrogant fellow has made himself an enemy of God and risks being cut out of God’s household, just like the unbelieving Jews he judges (Romans 11:21-22). As we will see, this is the very behavior and rhetoric that Paul pleaded with the Romans to not engage.

Author and researcher Dr. Michael Brown speaks of E. Michael Jones, Catholic scholar and author:

“Jones describes Jews as ‘outlaws and subversives [who use] religion as a cover for social revolution’ and claims that Judaism possesses ‘a particularly malignant spirit.’”

But here is the best one from Jones, a man who claims to love Jesus, the Jew.

“[T]he Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews was a reaction to Jewish Messianism (in the form of Bolshevism) every bit as much as the Chmielnicki pogroms flowed from the excesses of the Jewish tax farmers in the Ukraine.”

In other words, the Jews got what they deserve in the Holocaust. *Well, at least he is not a Holocaust denier!*

Books could be written on modern day Christian/Evangelical Jew-hatred. In the end, if they don't repent, people like this will defect to the antichrist, who will no doubt hate the Jews. Not at first, but eventually Hitler had his theologians to support his extermination of the Jews and the beast will, as well. Paul Althaus, Emanuel Hirsch, and Gerhard Kittel were three of the greatest protestant scholars of the twentieth century and also, outspoken, even excited, devotees of Hitler and the Nazi party.

Hirsch said,

“No other people of the world has a statesman *who is so serious about Christendom*; when Adolf Hitler concluded his great speech on May 1st with a prayer everybody could feel the wonderful candor therein.”^{xli}

And you don't think Christians will be deceived by the smooth-tongued anti-Christ!?

“And Kittel, the editor of the standard reference work on the Jewish background of the New Testament, began working for the Nazis to find a ‘moral’ rationale for the destruction of European Jewry.”^{xlii}

There is no question that some of those who fall away, betraying their brethren to death, whose hearts have waxed cold like a candle whose hot liquid solidifies when it drips away from the heat (Matthew 24:9-12), will be some of the greatest theological minds. They will, for a price, sell their soul, and give a theological backing to the beast, who is anti-Christ, to attack the Jewish people and proclaim himself to be Yahweh or some other deity. Hitler had his theologians, and so will the anti-Christ!

Where will you stand?

Paul the Apostle saw this struggle 2,000 years ago. In the book of Romans, he warned them of what would happen if they turned on their Jewish brothers. If you read Chapter 9, it is chilling the way Paul confesses that he would trade his own salvation, meaning, *he would go to hell*, if only his own brothers would believe. He was expressing, not merely his heart, as a fellow Jew, but God's heart for the Jewish people. God's purpose here was not to say that the

salvation of the Jews is worth more than that of others, but to illustrate how tragic it is that his oldest son in the family of nations has fallen away and he is calling on believers from the gentile nations to reach him and bring him back. God has always wanted to use the Gentiles to bring the Jews to their precious Messiah. But the enemy has managed to see the exact opposite take place—the Gentiles, even many in the church, became the chief persecutors of God’s first-born nation. And it breaks the Father’s heart.

In Chapter 11, Rabbi Saul moves on from his emotional plea to a theological plea. He tells the Gentiles that they have an anointing and a calling to reach the Jewish people, to “provoke them to jealousy,” (v. 11) through their kindness (v. 22). He also has a frightening warning. He seems to say that if they choose a different path, one of anti-Semitism and Jew-hatred, they could actually lose their salvation. Let me unpack that a little bit.

The book of Romans was written specifically because of the anti-Semitic attitudes that the Gentile believers in the Roman church had adopted toward the Jewish believers. In the year 49, the Roman emperor, Claudius, kicked all the Jews out of Rome. It is believed it was because of the infighting in the Jewish community over the issue of Yeshua. After all, *Claudius himself was a god, and these Jews were arguing over their supposed Messiah.*

When Nero comes to power, he invites the Jewish Romans back to Rome and they come. But many scholars, including the late brilliant Englishman David Pawson, teach that the Jewish believers were not received back into the church. If you read Paul’s rebuke, it seems that they had embraced a theology and, mind you, that is without a Bible. The only copy of the Scriptures were in the hands of the Jews (no other community had the Tanach), who had been kicked out and the New Testament had not yet been written. This new theology taught that God was against the Jewish people—that He had rejected them in favor of the Church. *It was the beginning of replacement theology.*

Paul then warns them that such attitudes could lead to pride and conceit (v. 25). He tells them that although the majority of Jewish people presently do not believe, God is not finished with them. Paul shares:

- That Israel’s calling is irrevocable (v. 29)
- That although many of them have been broken off of the olive tree, which represents the one new man, *God can graft them in again* (v. 23-24)

- That the hardening that they have received is only in part and it will be removed when the full number of Gentiles come into the Kingdom (v. 25)—which I believe represents the gospel touching every nation. My colleague, Asher Intrater, believes that it also speaks of the maturity of the Gentile church in understanding God’s role for Israel. After all, that is the context of verse 25: Paul says *I don’t want you to be ignorant, but to understand a mystery*, and the mystery is that God is not done with Israel.
- And then, the fullness of the gentiles leads to verse 26, which every Israeli believer knows by heart, “*Kol Yisrael Yivasha!*” = “All Israel will be saved!” = national revival!

It is a glorious plan! But in the midst of Paul’s teaching (*or can we call it prophecy?*), the rabbi/apostle issues a warning:

Do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches (the Jewish people). If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches, ***he will not spare you either.*** (Romans 11:18-21)

Paul is warning them against pride over God’s natural children. He says that instead of being arrogant, they should fear the Lord because their pride could lead to a similar fate of the ones they have judged: they could be broken off of the olive tree as well. Personally, I do not think it is easy to lose your salvation, but the clear interpretation of this verse is that there is no such thing as a Christian anti-Semite because the anti-Semite is cut away from the one-new-man olive tree. Paul is not quite done. He wants to make sure that they understand how dangerous anti-Jewish attitudes can be to their souls.

Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. (Romans 11:22)

He is saying to them that God is good, but He is also stern. You can see His sternness in the fallen state of Israel at that time. Massive judgment would come in just a few years: The Romans would utterly destroy Jerusalem. Yet He is gracious to these new gentiles who have found new life in Yeshua. Paul

then warns them: if they don't show that same graciousness to the Jewish people, then they too *will be cut off*! History has proven this correct! Did not the Roman church become an apostate church, even as they persecuted the Jewish people? It's a chilling warning, even while 99% of the believers over the centuries gloss right over Romans 11 and miss this.

Trust me, friends, this is going to be the *abortion*, if you will, of the end-time church. Read Zechariah 14, read Revelation 11 and 16. Read Matthew 24. It's all about Jerusalem! The antichrist is not going to try and take over Wichita, Kansas or even Moscow or Beijing. He wants Jerusalem, because he knows that is where the Messiah will reign. He attacks the Jewish people and people all over the world are going to have to choose: are they with him in this hatred of God's ancient people or against him? The decision could cost you your life, or worse, your soul!

This will be the most polarizing issue in the last days! Where will you stand?

Footnote on the Sheep and the Goats

Scholars struggle over the criteria that Yeshua lays out in this prophecy. It seems to say that the way to heaven is to do good things, which goes against the clear teaching of Scripture, which says that we are born again by confessing our sin and receiving the free gift of eternal life from Yeshua.

Actually, I don't think it's that difficult to dissect. These are not believers standing before the newly anointed King of all the earth. This is where people get confused. These people are what Zechariah calls "the *survivors* from all the nations." We believers are already ruling and reigning with Yeshua in our new, glorified bodies. Now He judges all the unbelievers that are still alive, and it would appear that the primary criterion is *how they treated the Jewish people*—particularly those Jews who had suffered during the latter years of the Great Tribulation at the hands of the antichrist. It would seem they are given an opportunity to be born again.

Of course, much of the end-times and the days following the return of the Lord are a mystery. Only God sees the full picture, while we "look through a glass darkly."

Footnote two

I want to be clear about something else. The One New Man is the body of

believers and God has set His affection upon it. It is made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Please don't walk away from this chapter with an attitude that Jews are better than others or that that is what I am saying. Absolutely not. This is about God's plan for the end-times. We still have distinctions as Jews and Gentiles, and males and females, but when it comes to God's affection, He does not see race, gender, or anything else, but how passionate we are about Him. He responds to our hunger and desire for Him, not some other outside indicator. God loves His whole body and He does not show favoritism.

20.—Closing thoughts

A FIELD TRIP TO THE GATES OF HELL—VICTORY!

In Matthew 16, we see Yeshua and his disciples heading north from Capernaum, His headquarters. By car, it only takes an hour, but by foot it is a good 12-hour hike. So, why would Yeshua take His disciples on such a journey and where were they going?

Would you believe me if I told you, *“To the gates of Hell”*?

Matthew tells us that they visited Caesarea Philippi. Not to be confused with the port city of Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast, Caesarea Philippi was an utterly pagan city. Caesarea Philippi was so steeped in immorality and idol worship that the rabbis reviled it and taught that no good Jew would ever go there. Yet Yeshua, the greatest Jew of all, takes His Jewish disciples there on a field trip. Why?

This city can be found at the foot of Mount Hermon. Mount Hermon was a hotbed of idol worship going back to the ancient Canaanites. There is a colossal rock wall, referred to as the ‘Rock of the gods’, as there are many pagan shrines built into the rock. However, in the center of this massive rock is a huge cave and inside is a very deep pool where a powerful stream of water flowed. This cave was called “the Gates of Hell.” These pagans were convinced that this was the passageway for the gods between earth and the underworld.

Yeshua arrives at this most awful city and, to be clear, He may have just come into the region, but also into the city—with His disciples and begins a conversation. Let’s read:

When Yeshua came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do

you say I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Yeshua replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter—which is Greek for Rock) and on this rock I will build my congregation, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it.” (Matthew 16:13-18)

So Yeshua, possibly standing before this massive rock or at least in its vicinity (that was thought by many to be the source of immense spiritual power), says to Peter, who would lead the body of believers in its early days, “In Me you are far more powerful than this rock.” He is saying that the powers of Satan and pagan worship are not even worthy to be compared to the Gospel message in the mouths of His apostles and prophets—whom Paul calls the foundation stone of the New Testament congregation. (Ephesians 2:20)

But then He says “*The Gates of Hell*” *will not prevail against the new Messianic community*. Now gates do not typically go on the attack! Of course, in context He is referring to the Gates of Hell at Caesarea Philippi—which represents the pathway to hell. He was saying all the powers of Hell could not overcome the body of believers.

Yeshua was not just another Greek god or mythical figure, but as Peter said, he was the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

This is where I want to close. I know this book was heavy. End-times, false prophets, birth pangs, earthquakes, pandemics and riots—and then just two nights ago, the death of the Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Erev Rosh Hashanah, sending an already divided country into a new level of polarization. It is crazy that I started writing these final words wearing a mask on an overseas flight from Israel to the U.S. The airport experience in Israel was one of the most surreal experiences of my life. It was oppressive. It angered me. I was flustered. I used to fly to the U.S. three or four times a year for ministry. It was part of my routine.

I am not complaining; I am seeking to identify something in the spirit. We must keep our eyes on the prize of Yeshua, of preaching the gospel. I can’t get sidetracked with worrying about how I feel with this mask on. This experience

only underscores that we are living in a new season. We will be dealing with many emotions from anger to frustration, but we must see beyond that. After nine months of the dealing with the coronavirus, this was the most strange and unnerving experience yet.

But I say that, to say this: I just want to remind you—*Yeshua wins!* He is the King of all the earth! He will be crowned victorious in Jerusalem and we will reign with him for a thousand years!

You *are* victorious. Just “endure till the end” because the end will be glorious! All gods will bow to our God, Yahweh. Every demon in hell will acknowledge Yeshua. You will be clothed with an immortal, incorruptible body! This is not a time to be depressed, but to share the gospel and to tell the story of Yeshua.

Don’t be discouraged. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is from Luke 21. Yeshua has a funny way of telling people to not be afraid during the most intense moments. In Matthew 10:28 he says,

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

This was just after He told them they might die at the hands of His persecutors. In Matthew 24 He tells His boys not to be alarmed when the world is crumbling. As they are about to die in a vicious storm, He says, “Why are you so afraid?” That is like telling someone on the Titanic not to worry that the ship has just broken in two and Leonardo DeCaprio is about to freeze to death!

But Yeshua tells us these things to assure us: “I’m in control. It’s okay. I got you!” Remember Goshen!

So, back to Luke 21:

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:25-28)

Here is another one ... nations in anguish, signs in the heavens, people fainting, terror, coronavirus!!! It would be understandable for you to be a bit concerned, if not downright terrified! For this reason, He adds these words to the written, unshakable Word of God.

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, *because your redemption is drawing near.*” (Luke 21:28)

We are close, friends. Now is not the time to throw in the towel or panic. We take our stand now and we make our decision now. When the day comes and we are pressured to follow the evil one, no matter what is happening on Planet Earth, we will stay loyal to the one who died for us.

“We wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Yeshua the Messiah.” (Titus 2:13)

“Waiting” here is not a passive type of waiting. It is closer to longing. Like a young lady waiting for her fiancée to return from war to marry her. She is not merely waiting ... she is longing. She can’t sleep or eat. She thinks about him constantly. She dreams of the day he will arrive. That is how we are to wait for Yeshua.

Friend, are you passionate about His coming? Do you long for His appearing? I do! I want to see Him in all His glory. I can’t wait for the day that I look up and see “the sign of the Son of Man in heaven,” (Matthew 24:30). I long to see what John saw when the revelator wrote, “Look, He is coming with the clouds!” and “every eye will see Him.” (Revelation 1:7)

Yeshua is not going to return for a disinterested, bored bride. Imagine: A bridegroom is waiting at the altar for his bride. He looks to the entrance where she’s about to come in. He’s a little surprised that she’s chewing gum and reading a gossip magazine. She’s checking text messages on her phone. In other words, *she’s not acting like this is the most amazing day of her life.* Yet that is how many believers look to heaven in regards to the coming of the Lord.

Every day we should be confessing the words, “*Maranatha, come Lord!*” The Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, ends with these words:

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The bride is called to make herself ready by separating from the world and its passions. He is not going to return to a beaten down, defeated bride. Neither will He return to a compromised bride who gives herself to other passions. I am not a “holiness” or “repentance” preacher. I don’t make a habit of yelling at people that they need to be holy or decrying how backslidden the church is. That’s not my thing. But I do believe, as we get closer to the coming of the Lord, that those who love Him will want to look like Him. I also believe there will be more grace to live for Him with reckless abandon, even being willing to be martyred for our faith.

That’s it, my friend. If I can leave you with one message, it would be this: *Long for His coming*. Tell him every day, “Yeshua, come! I long to see you! Come, take your bride!”

מרנא-תא

Maranatha! Come Lord!

ABOUT RON CANTOR

Ron Cantor serves as the President of Shelanu.tv, a Hebrew-language internet-based television station reaching Israelis with the message of Yeshua. Shelanu.tv is part of the GOD TV family, where Ron is the Israel regional director. Ron most recently served as the CEO of Tikkun Global, where he is still is on the board, overseeing communications and media.

Ron was born into a Jewish home, circumcised and Bar Mitzvah'd, but did not know God! At age 17, he realized, there must be more. This led him on a journey where he discovered that Yeshua (Jesus), was in fact, the Jewish Messiah—despite being taught all his life that Jesus was just for the Gentiles. Read more at <https://messiahsmandate.org/rons-story/>

Ron received his degree from Messiah Biblical Institute and served as the Associate Rabbi at Beth Messiah Messianic congregation in Rockville, MD until the Cantor family moved to Odessa, Ukraine, to work in the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute. In Ukraine, Ron and his wife Elana, birthed a congregation in the city upon which *Fiddler on the Roof* was based, Berdichev. They then moved to Budapest, Hungary.

In 1999 they accepted an invitation to help raise up leaders at the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry. In 2003 the Cantors made aliyah (moved to Israel). Ron served as the co-pastor and interim senior pastor of King of Kings Community in Jerusalem.

During this time Ron birthed the Isaiah 2 Initiative, taking Israeli young adults to third world nations to preach the message of Yeshua.

In 2013 Ron agreed to become the lead pastor of Tiferet Yeshua, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. Three years later, Ron and Elana turned the congregation over to a native-born Israeli, while still functioning as an eldership couple there. Ron and Elana live in Tel Aviv and have three wonderful daughters, two of whom live in Tel Aviv and one in the United States.

Get Ron's blogs and update at www.roncantor.com. When you subscribe, you will receive his book, *The Coming End-Time Awakening*, as a free gift.

Ron and Elana also lead powerful Israel tours from the perspective of Messianic Jewish Israelis. For more information on upcoming tours, go to www.uptozion.net/

ENDNOTES

ⁱ<https://www.theus.org.uk/article/birth-pangs-mashiach-messiah>

ⁱⁱhttps://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/633840/jewish/Birth-Pangs-of-the-Messianic-Era.htm

ⁱⁱⁱThe Textus Receptus, Greek manuscript used for the KJV amongst others, has the word plague (loimoi) while others do not. However, it is mentioned elsewhere, such as in Luke 21:11, so we can be assured that it was part of Yeshua's end-time teaching

^{iv}https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/unhealthy-eating-is-linked-to-400-000-us-deaths-per-year-study-117031000021_1.html

From the article: Americans are eating too much salty, fatty and sugary fare, and not enough fruit, vegetables and whole grains, experts said at a meeting of the American Heart Association in Portland, Oregon.

“Low intake of healthy foods such as nuts, vegetables, whole grains and fruits combined with higher intake of unhealthy dietary components, such as salt and trans-fat, is a major contributor to deaths from cardiovascular disease in the United States,” said lead study author Ashkan Afshin, assistant professor of global health at the University of Washington’s Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

^vExpositors Bible Commentary, New Testament, 2004

^{vi}<https://bible.org/question/where-did-term-8216rapture-come>

^{vii}Ibid

^{viii}<http://www.persecution.org/2012/07/30/rally-for-the-40-million-martyred-christians>

^{ix}[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Catalina_Island_\(California\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Catalina_Island_(California))

^xhttps://www.libertytothecaptives.net/ten_boom.html

^{xi}<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52157824>

^{xii}<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/04/14/coronavirus-bishop-who-defied-social-distancing-dies-covid-19/2987693001>

^{xiii}<https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/pastor-who-prayed-against-mask-mandate-lands-in-icu-for-covid-19-still-believes-in-personal-choice>

^{xiv}<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/christianity-china>

^{xv}Halley's Bible Handbook with the New International Version, Copyright © 2000 by Halley's Bible Handbook, Inc.

^{xvi}<https://baptistnews.com/article/brueggemann-points-to-a-food-fight-in-scripture/#.XxqXhfgzaHE>

^{xvii}<https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/holidays/rosh-hashanah/the-history-of-rosh-hashanah-which-wasn-t-always-the-new-year-1.5301295>

^{xviii}<https://josephmattera.org/the-office-of-prophet-and-contemporary-times/>

^{xix}<https://www.winknews.com/2020/09/23/cdc-shows-covid-19-has-high-survival-rate-doctor-still-wants-to-see-precautions-taken/>

^{xx}<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdVY9UjEQ2Q>

^{xxi}<https://youtu.be/spwapz-275Y?t=279>

^{xxii}<https://youtu.be/4NFjxZm5DX4>

^{xxiii}Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament © 2004

^{xxiv}Understand, I was not saying that God is saying that the looters and criminals are believers. Rather, that in the same way that God used Assyria, an evil nation to judge Israel, calling Assyria "my servant," God desires to use the evil actions of these people to wake us up. But even as Assyria went too far, and God had to judge them, so too can the rioters.

^{xxv}I was not seeking to communicate that there is no place for activism, but in the analogy, the cart is activation, but the horse is the gospel. Fighting for biblical values without primarily focusing on the preaching of the gospel will not produce life. Remember, there was a "good" side of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but it still produced death. Only the Gospel of Yeshua brings eternal life.

^{xxvi}Man of Peace by Bob Dylan, on Infidels album

^{xxvii}<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERUngQUCsyE>

^{xxviii}<https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/wjc-analysis-carmen-matussek-the-protocols-of-the-elders-of-zion-in-the-arab-world>

^{xxix}<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/anti-semitism-2000-years-of-scapegoating-the-jews-403959>

^{xxx}Revolution in the Church, Dr. Michael Brown, Copyright 2012, Kirkdale Press

^{xxxi}David Regan's paper, Anti-Semitism: Its Roots and Perseverance

^{xxxii}Gabriel Wilensky, Six Million Crucifixions: How Christian Teachings About Jews Paved the Road to the Holocaust, (San Diego, CA: QWERTY Publishers, 2010), p. 98.

^{xxxiii}Excerpt from "Ad Quaelstiones et Objecta Juaei Cuiusdam Responsio," by John Calvin; The Jew in Christian Theology, Gerhard Falk, McFarland and Company, Inc., Jefferson, NC and London, 1931.

^{xxxiv}<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-39/was-luther-anti-semitic.html>

^{xxxv}ibid

^{xxxvi}"Luthers theologisch testament", René Süß, 2006. Published by: VU University Press, ISBN 9789086590155

^{xxxvii}<http://oneinmessiah.net/FCF.htm>

^{xxxviii}<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/features/uighurs>

^{xxxix}These quotes (and many more!) are found in Michael L. Brown, Christian Antisemitism: Confronting the Lies in Today's Church (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2021). Look for it in 2021!

^{xl}Kampeas, Ron (January 23, 2020). Trump White House Again Credentials Website That Called Impeachment a 'Jew Coup'. Haaretz. JTA. Retrieved January 24, 2020 and Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_Wiles#cite_note-0-6

^{xli}https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Hirsch#cite_note-2

^{xlii}<https://www.amazon.com/Theologians-Under-Hitler-Robert-Ericksen/dp/B000BJKWO0>

