

The Messenger

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Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me."

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Prepare America! 123

A Prophetic Word to a Nation in Crisis

Part 1 of 7

Prepare the Way of the Lord

by Rob Winters

In March of this year, approximately a week after the earthquake in Japan, I abruptly awoke at 1:23 AM. I did not give it much thought, until I again suddenly awoke at precisely 1:23 AM the very next night. Knowing that the Lord was speaking through this prophetic sign, I carefully examined all of the 1:23, 1:2-3, 12:3 and 123 scriptures in the Bible. I discovered in the 123 scriptures a clear prophetic message to America. I will elaborate on this message in seven consecutive editions of *The Messenger*, this one being the first.

Making His Paths Straight

The first thing that caught my attention was that two of the 123 scripture passages in the Gospels proclaimed a sober message to prepare the way of the Lord, by making a straight path for Him.

John **1:23** He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the Lord."' as the prophet Isaiah said."

Mark **1:2-3** "As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'"

There are many aspects to New Testament prophetic ministry, including signs, wonders, miracles, and prophecy. However, the missing ingredient in many prophetic ministries today is repentance preaching. Unfortunately, over the past several years, many have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, proclaiming what the Church

wants to hear, instead of what the Church needs to hear. In contrast, John the Baptist, without one recorded sign, wonder or miracle, prepared the way for Jesus' first coming by simply preaching a message and administering a baptism of repentance. Today the Lord seeks to condition and commission a prophetic company of ministers with a message and mantle of repentance, to prepare the way for not only an unprecedented, worldwide revival and end-time harvest, but also Jesus' second coming. Therefore, judgment must first begin in the house of God, starting with the foundation – His apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (I Peter 4:17).

Before we can prepare the way of the Lord, we must be prepared by the Lord. In other words, before we can make straight the way of the Lord, we have to straighten up. Indeed, America's pulpiteers must experience a purging and cleansing prior to the corporate purification and transformation of our churches into temples of glory. Ministers must therefore lead by example - confessing and forsaking sins such as ambition, greed, pride, jealousy, prayerlessness, and pornography. Without genuine repentance, anointed and convicting messages of repentance will not be heralded from America's pulpits, and the Church at large will be left to drown in a quagmire of sin.

Because of the Sins of Her Prophets

After years of intercession for and passionate prophetic pleas to his beloved Israel, the prophet Jeremiah was heart-broken over Israel's take-over and exile to Babylon. Jeremiah's lamentations, recorded in scripture, reveal that the root cause of Israel's backslidden spiritual condition and resultant captivity was "because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests" (Lamentations 4:12-13).

In the Old Covenant, prophets, priests and kings were divinely delegated, authoritative offices through which the Lord achieved His purposes. Prophets proclaimed and kings executed divine will, purpose and direction. Priests, on the other hand, interceded to God in behalf of the people. However, in the New Covenant, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers comprise the foundational authority structure of the Church. Through these offices, the Church - Christ's ambassadorship of kings and priests, is edified and equipped to execute the Lord's end-time purposes in every kingdom of this world. These earthly kingdoms include governmental, educational, marketplace, media, arts and entertainment venues of our culture (Ephesians 4:11-12, II Corinthians 5:20, Revelation 5:10).

Therefore, the degeneracy and looming judgment of America is due to the sins of not only our prophets, but also the entire authority structure of the Church, which includes pastors, teachers, evangelists and apostles. For example, some pastors, for fear of losing members, have covered from preaching on tithing and fasting or against adultery and fornication. Apprehensive of losing popularity, financial support and air time, some evangelists have refrained from decrying sins such as abortion, pornography and drunkenness. In order to maintain friendly associations and not "rock the boat", some apostles have failed to raise higher standards for righteous and holy living, prayer, and accountability for their network members. Indeed, ministers' fear of man

and love of money have not only kept America spiritually lukewarm, but also have prevented revival fires from burning throughout our nation.

Prior to Judah's captivity, Jeremiah grieved over Judah's false prophets, who were leading the nation astray. He therefore warned Judah by preaching a message against these prophets who committed adultery, strengthened the hands of evildoers, and prophesied by Baal (Jeremiah 23:9-18). In the middle of his sermon, Jeremiah declares in verses eighteen and nineteen, "Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury – a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly". Immediately following this passage, Jeremiah continues through the end of chapter twenty-three, warning Judah regarding these prophets, who prophesied lies and false dreams, and perverted the words of the living God (Jeremiah 23:21-40).

Could the Lord in these latter days be imparting to the Church a greater understanding regarding the severe consequences of allowing a nation to be led into deception, depravity and apostasy? Could America be reaping judgment due to the Church's indifference to the widespread proclamation and unqualified reception of godless ideals, lifestyles and agendas that have deceived our nation and destroyed our foundation? Could recent record-breaking destructive whirlwinds, that have devastated our Southern and Midwestern states, be a consequence of the Church's sustained tolerance of the prophetic pollution that has contaminated the minds and hearts of millions? Some may reject such a notion.

Regardless, the moral standards and compass of Americans have largely been influenced by a liberal press, a secular humanistic educational system, and a corrupt socio-political structure that has been tainted by the worship of Mammon – while the Church has remained relatively silent. Instead of renewing minds with the life transforming gospel of the kingdom, some ministers have been conformed to this world and propagated a popular and profitable gospel of "peace and safety" and self-serving prosperity. Indeed, we must be delivered from the fear of man and the love of money to effectively deliver messages that will bring genuine repentance and rebuild America's foundation of righteousness and justice. Truly, the Lord must first do a work in us before He can do a work through us (Romans 12:2).

Repent of Prayerlessness and Pride

Another 123 scripture identifies humility is the primary characteristic that set Moses apart from the other prophets of his day. Although the Lord used Moses to perform many miracles and deliver Israel out of Egyptian bondage, Moses was careful to give all the glory to God so as not to become puffed up with pride.

Numbers **12:3** "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth."

Moses' intimate relationship with God kept him humble. While the Lord made Himself known to other prophets through dreams and visions, Moses' daily pursuit of God's presence allowed the Lord to speak to him plainly - face to face. Moses' encounters with the Lord brought the revelation, conviction, repentance, and purgation of sin necessary to not only keep him humble, but also qualify him to continue leading Israel (Numbers 12:6-8).

In order to receive strategic revelations and guidance for our nation, like Moses, we ministers today must daily dwell in the secret place of the Most High. The level of revelation we receive will be determined by the level of our commitment to daily seek His face. Unfortunately, a recent poll revealed that American ministers spend an average of less than five minutes a day in prayer. If we continue to forsake fellowship with the Master, we will not only become increasingly subject to pride and deception, but also be in danger of being disqualified. Therefore, humility, demonstrated through daily prayer, is not only a key component of our preparation, but also necessary to fulfill our call as righteous messengers of truth and hope to a nation in crisis.

Repent of a Flattering Tongue

A love for prestige and profit has crippled many American pulpiteers, preventing them from delivering confrontational messages from the throne room of God that "cut to the heart". Instead of making straight the ways of the Lord through repentance preaching, many have sought popularity and prosperity through flattering, flesh-petting prophecies. Another 123 scripture, this one from the book of Psalms, warns against a flattering tongue. It is therefore imperative that we ministers repent of ear-tickling and receive deliverance from the fear of man and the love of money.

Psalm **12:3** "May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things."

Frustrated with the abundance of disingenuous prophetic voices that were deceiving the masses, the Lord forever set the standard for authentic prophetic ministry through the prophet Jeremiah. Simply put, prophets whose words turned people from their evil ways and works were sent by Him, whereas prophets whose ministry was devoid of the fruits of repentance were self-commissioned. Therefore, we must remain faithful to our heavenly calling by issuing a clear trumpet call to repentance to the Church and nation of America (Jeremiah 23:21-22).

Preach Christ Crucified

In another 123 passage, the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the church at Corinth emphasizes the necessity of preaching a crucified Christ. Unfortunately, many American ministers preach a resurrected Christ, but not a crucified Christ. Most messages cater to our selfish desires, focusing upon Christ's peace, His promises and prosperity, without regard to the selfless aspects of the Gospel, which include service, sacrifice and

suffering. As a result, our knowledge of God has become one dimensional. In other words, we have come to know Christ as Savior, but not as Lord.

1 Corinthians **1:23** "But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness."

Unless we are conformed to the Lord's death through the fellowship of His sufferings, we can neither fully know Him, nor experience His resurrection power. Self-denial is an aspect of the Gospel that is foreign to many Americans, yet essential to living a crucified life. Jesus Himself learned obedience through the things that He suffered, which included the ultimate sacrifice – death on the cross. Unfortunately, a gospel preached devoid of the sufferings of Christ has produced a selfish generation of Christians enslaved to sin and the lusts of men, instead of the will of God (Philippians 2:8, 3:10, Hebrews 5:8, I Peter 4:1-2).

Apostle Peter's first epistle contains a 123 passage indicating that spiritual rebirth can only occur through the incorruptible seed of God's word. Sadly, our gospel message has become somewhat corrupted, yielding a harvest of immature spiritual sons, who have neither been taught to become God's servants, nor been trained to become soldiers of the cross. We've erred by measuring church growth by the number of hands raised during a salvation "altar call", instead of by the number of those surrendering to water baptism as a public confession of their commitment to Christ.

1 Peter **1:23** "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."

As a result, America's lop-sided gospel of peace, promises and prosperity without service, sacrifice and suffering has produced converts, instead of disciples. Converts are content in being served, whereas disciples live to serve, loving not their lives even to death. Converts are concerned about their own salvation, whereas disciples are concerned with saving others, pulling sinners out of hell's eternal fire. The self-sacrificial life of a disciple is required to reap a harvest of souls. Therefore, we must preach Christ crucified in this hour (John 12:24).

Jude **1:23** "But others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Regrettably, Hollywood and many of America's mainstream intellectuals and professionals have mocked repentance preachers, deeming their "hell fire and brimstone" messages as primitive, manipulative and ridiculous. Regardless, it pleases God to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching. Indeed, a gospel devoid of hell is a gospel without consequence. In other words, if the reality of a Christ-less eternity in hell for the unrepentant is never preached, then the fear of hell ceases to exist. If there is no fear of hell, then there can be no fear of God. Without the fear of God, there can be no genuine repentance, and without repentance, there can be no salvation (I Corinthians 1:21).

Turn at His Rebuke

The 123 scripture below from the book of Proverbs provides us with a clear prescription for receiving not only a fresh anointing, but also the “word of the Lord” for this hour. America’s pulpits must be purged before the Church at large can be purified. Indeed, it is impossible to pour out anointed, convicting messages of repentance from vessels that are contaminated by sin. Statistics reveal that thirty percent of America’s pastors either have been engaged in an ongoing affair or had a one-time sexual encounter with a parishioner. Almost forty percent of pastors polled have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry. Surely, ministers cannot deliver others from the web of pornography and sexual sin until they themselves are set free. Therefore, ministers’ conviction, confession and forsaking of sin is required to yield a glorious outpouring of His Spirit that is accompanied by powerful sermons and songs of deliverance required to set the captives free.

Proverbs **1:23** “Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.”

The Lord does nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets. Unfortunately, many ministers have continued to walk in sin instead of the fear of the Lord, causing His secrets to remain hidden. However, if we ministers will lead the American Church in repentance, the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon us in increasing measure and there will cease to be a famine in the land for the prophetic word of the Lord (Amos 3:7, Psalm 25:14).

Shout It from the Housetops

In Luke’s gospel account, Jesus exhorted His disciples to beware of the hypocrisy and craftiness of the Pharisees, who sought to trap Jesus in His speech. Knowing His disciples would one day be subject to the same scrutiny and accusations, Jesus taught them in the following 123 passage:

Luke **12:3** “Therefore, whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.”

In this season, a hidden remnant of ministers, an Elisha Commission, is emerging in America with a double portion of the Holy Spirit’s anointing. These have faithfully labored in obscurity for years, yet will now be brought to the forefront by the Lord to be heard by many. Prepared by the Lord, these ministers will prepare the way of the Lord. Preaching a message and possessing a mantle of repentance, this remnant will play an integral role in turning America back to God and catalyzing a revival and righteous revolution that will transform and reform this nation.