

# When Prophets and Pastors Are Blind as Bats

“Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it.

“If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it.”

Those were the words of Charles G. Finney, a leader in America’s Second Great Awakening, recorded on Dec. 4, 1843. Those words were true then but are especially prophetic for our generation. Immorality is prevailing in the land. There is a decay of conscience. The media lacks moral discrimination. The church is degenerate and worldly. The world has lost its interest in religion. Satan rules in our halls of legislation. Politics are corrupt, and the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away.

## **History Repeats Itself**

Yes, those words are true today, they were true 171 years ago—and they were true thousands of years before that in Isaiah’s day. Indeed, history continues to repeat itself as spiritual leaders are struck blind in their disobedience to God’s Word. Many are hearers—and preachers—of the Word but have deceived themselves by not walking in truth (see James 1:22).

The spirit of the world has invaded our church—but some pastors embrace carnal Christianity and are unwilling to confront sin for fear of losing tithes to an ear-tickling church. Their conscience is seared with a hot iron (see 1 Tim. 4:1) so they can't see how their compromise is affecting the flock—leading them down a broad path that leads to destruction (see Matt. 7:13). I sometimes wonder if God has given some pastors and prophets over to a reprobate mind (see Rom. 1:28)—or at least left them in their blindness and slumber. Isaiah put it this way:

“Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink. For the Lord has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, namely, the seers” (Isa. 29:9-10).

Although many in prophetic ministry are sounding the alarm, blowing the trumpet and stirring souls to wake up and understand the signs of the times, many in pulpits are blind watchmen who are just out for greedy gain. Isaiah prophesied to the irresponsible leaders in his day:

“All you beasts of the field, come to devour, all you beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough. And they are shepherds who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own territory” (Isa. 56:9-11).

### **Will History Repeat Itself Again?**

Saints, immorality is prevailing in the land. There is a decay of conscience. The media lacks moral discrimination. The church is degenerate and worldly. The world has lost its interest in religion. Satan rules in our halls of legislation.

Politics are corrupt—and the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away.

But here's the good news. History repeats itself. Just before the first two Great Awakenings, people thought the church was done for. Many thought there was no hope. But with God there is always hope. God is a God of hope (Rom. 15:13). I am hoping—I am believing—for another Great Awakening in this land. I am hoping—I am believing—that the pastors and prophets will repent from their ear-tickling messages. I am hoping—I am believing—that the remnant will rise up in intercession for this land so that God will intervene.

I've been called a false prophet for hoping and believing. So be it. If we cannot hope for another Great Awakening, then we may as well give up. We have Christ in us, the hope of glory (see Col. 1:27). Church, it's time for us to wake up as individuals and begin hoping and praying again despite the darkness we see all around us. It's time to walk by faith and not by sight (see 2 Cor. 5:7). It's time for us to release believing prayers, because our intercession is what can turn this around.

“Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine” (Psalm 33:18-19). Amen.

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# How You Can Wield Prayers Against Injustice in Your Life

Like David, have you ever had your reputation tarnished, been betrayed by others or gotten innocently entangled in a mess? If not, keep living—it will happen! I can attest, though, that if you faithfully stand with God in prayer, when the dust settles, you will be standing in your destiny. The principles I learned in this story helped me understand how to apply these concepts in my own life. They also helped me understand the dynamics of how God brought me out when I was entangled in a mess, much like David.

Many years ago, I was in a business situation where I was being forced to pay a great sum of money that I did not owe. A business relationship was destroyed when some twisted advice poisoned the minds of this company's executives concerning me. Influenced by their own "Ahithophels," this company was pressuring me with legal threats. Because of their influence, my reputation was tarnished with this company, and to make matters worse, they knew I did not owe the money but that I could not prove otherwise. These "advisors" had enormous favor and clout, and suddenly I did not. Legally, I was in a serious bind. I could not prove I did not owe the money due to poor record keeping, the details of which would take too long to explain. Suffice it to say, I was caught up in a web of deception. It was a situation where I had all the responsibility and no authority, or so it seemed.

Depressed and fighting back the suicidal thoughts and scenarios the enemy was throwing at me, I forced myself into a midweek revival service at a local church. Discouraged and depressed beyond description, I sat down, feeling all alone, fighting to last through praise and worship. But when the

speaker came forward to speak, something unusual happened.

The evangelist walked to the pulpit, and before he spoke, he peered over the crowd of some fifteen hundred people and made eye contact with me in the middle of the audience. He then leaped forward from the platform and began walking briskly toward me without breaking eye contact. This was long before I did public ministry, and we did not know each other. I wondered, *Is he coming toward me?* About that time, a woman sitting in front of me stood up and threw up her hands, thinking he was coming to pray for her. He politely moved her out of the way, however, and said, "I'm sorry, but not you, ma'am. You, sir, step out in the aisle." He then laid hands on me and prayed.

I felt Christ's love coursing through me in a powerful way. With tears of joy streaming down my face, I asked the Lord why He had the evangelist single me out of the crowd. I will never forget His response. He said, *William, I will part a Red Sea to make a way for you, and I will part a crowd of people to let you know how much I love you.* That night my nightmare of depression, suicide and despair was broken. The moment I heard this, I knew that God was making a way out of no way for me. I have never felt that sense of hopelessness or struggled with suicide again.

With the newfound faith and assurance God had given me regarding this matter, I found that I did have authority over this situation—in prayer! I realized my battle was not against a large company but against the powers of darkness, and these people were pawns in a spiritual battle. Under the influence of God's loving assurance that He was with me, God began to show me key prayer strategies and how to partner with Him and take authority over this unjust circumstance. This was nothing that happened overnight; I had to stand in prayer for months while making myself vulnerable to intense scrutiny. But what did God do?

Eventually the company was scrutinized, investigated, audited and exposed for corruption. They later went out of business, and my so-called debt was canceled. God made a way out of no way for me. Did I pray for this company to shut down? No. But because God showed me key strategies for praying into this situation, what was bound in heaven eventually was bound on earth. The influence of the enemy was cut off, and when all the dust settled, I was still standing in the middle of God's will for my life.

Is it not awesome to know that popularity and the fickle opinions of people do not matter? God is the author of your destiny, and He will give you, as He did David, the special insight into temporary circumstances to know how to pray. He will show you what is going on in the unseen realm if you are willing to draw near to Him as David did. This applies not only to individuals but also to nations. In the end, newspaper headlines only track temporary fads. The real question is whether or not the Church will draw close enough to God in prayer to rise to her rightful place of influence on the earth.

Just as with King David, God has a plan for our personal and national destinies that will prevail through us if we will stand the trial of faithful prayer. Isn't it a great encouragement to know that your heart and destiny are in God's grip? He will shape the destiny of loved ones, families, cities and even nations through your intimacy with Him in prayer.

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# George O. Wood: Why We Celebrate the AG's Centennial

Watch Assemblies of God General Superintendent George O. Wood offers a personal take on what the AG has accomplished and what this year's AG Centennial celebration is all about.

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# This Key Step Can Help You Change Your World

Pat Schatzline says that when you get your destiny in sync with God, it blesses your whole family. Then it changes the world around you.

See what he had to say on *Sid Roth's It's Supernatural*, and find out how to change your world.