

How Should We Practically Respond to the Shemitah Predictions?

There has been a lot of talk and speculation about what is coming upon the world this fall. Just look at *New York Times* best-sellers like *The Harbinger* and *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, contemporary prophets and blood moon preachers.

While we can't draw hard and fast doctrines from any of these things, they are signs that make one wonder. I personally have heard quite a bit about what is supposed to happen in America this September but very little about what we are to do. Is it just me or does it feel like someone just sucked the air out of the room?

It's like a collective gasp around the body of Christ right now as many of us are frozen, stuck and unsure of what to do. Some are even locked up in fear while the enemy just laughs. But I believe God is raising up people who understand the times and know what to do.

"From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take" (1 Chronicles 12:32, NLT).

Just as God raised up the sons of Issachar who could interpret the times and know what to do, we need to be equipped with knowledge and wisdom on how to take action for the good of the church and for the sake of the gospel.

Faith Not Fear

No matter what happens this fall, none of it will take God by surprise. The answer to navigating the potentially troubled

waters of this fall is rooted in faith and not fear. If your plan is to hunker down, hoard and just hold on, friends I am sorry you are missing the point.

It would help us all to dig into the book of Hebrews to see a bigger picture. In Hebrews chapter 11, we see the many things the heroes of faith endured. By faith Noah, by faith Abraham, by faith Moses, they ran their race well and endured hardship "by faith" and became heroes of the faith. In chapter 12, we are reminded that God disciplines us as His sons and that we are to endure hardship as discipline from the Lord. Discipline is a sign of our sonship. He goes on to tell us that there is a time period that God will shake everything that can be shaken so that we can receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

God's Shakings Are Redemptive in Nature

One thing we need to understand if we are talking about a God-orchestrated shaking is that it is redemptive in nature and designed to perfect love for Him and for others. It's ultimately the first and second commandment coming into first and second place. Anything not under the lordship of Christ needs to be and will be shaken anyway if it is hindering love for Him and others.

Think about that for a second.

What distractions are in your life that keep you from loving Him and others wholeheartedly? Right now is your heart tender and free from the cares of this life? Is He truly your magnificent obsession? Are you living fully for Him and through Him? Secondly, right now do you love others as yourself and carry a burden for the lost among the nations? This should serve as a tuning fork for our hearts because it is what is on His heart.

How Will We Respond?

If this is true, our response to the potential shakings of this fall should look different. Our preparedness for an economic, political or even geological shaking should be more than a desperate attempt to hold onto our western lifestyles.

Preparing for the days ahead is so much deeper than hoarding stuff. I have news for you, if that is your response, then God may even shake that too. Do you really think He is looking for more western independence? It makes me wonder how many people are paralyzed in fear right now of what's coming and have retreated from what God has called them to do.

Our western gospel of comfort, that is devoid of the notion that we may suffer, has fashioned a golden image of who God is. With the threat that their god may be shaken, people are locked down in fear. Shakings are the litmus test to show who we really serve. Ask yourself this question, how much of my lifestyle did I fabricate and how much of it is built on God's unshakable kingdom?

Restoring the Second Commandment

The other aspect we need to understand is that in the shakings, God is restoring the second commandment as well as the first commandment. Love for others. What happens in the midst of a disaster or crisis? People come together and help each other. As we prepare for this fall, we need to be preparing to help others.

Today there is a prophecy about global crisis and the response is: determine to prepare for survival and self-preservation. In the 1st century there was a prophecy about a global crisis (Acts 11:27-30) and the response was: giving and aiding those impacted, each according to their ability determined to send relief to the brethren elsewhere.

We love to point fingers at the corporate depravity of our nation and say she deserves punishment while our hearts are just as bankrupt. Let's take this time to examine our own

lives and actions before we point the finger at anyone around us and make sure we are caring for the poor, needy and hurting, heeding the warnings of Scripture for the actions of Sodom.

“Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen” (Ezek. 16:49-50, NIV).

Folks, it is an upside down kingdom. You give it away to keep it and this is a sign your heart is free. Again, if God is dealing corporately with us in America, then our preparedness should be more of the heart than a fear based grasp to hold onto our western lifestyles. Now there is nothing wrong with preparing your home, neighborhood, church and business for crisis and disaster.

Here at Crisis Response International (CRI) we hold seminars on how to train people to do so. However as the church we need to take inventory of our heart's motivation to make sure we are not hunkering and bunkering in fear, but rather getting ready to help others and be the glorious church in that hour. If something is out from under the lordship of Christ right now in your life, then you want that dealt with now and not later.

Hebrews 11:7 says, “By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family” (NIV). It says that Noah by holy fear prepared for his family.

Are you responding in faith or fear? Let's choose faith. Join us this September 13-23 as we call a fast for our nation. We are praying and believing for an outpouring of God's Spirit on the hearts and minds of those in our nation. Let's humble ourselves before the Lord and believe that together we'll see

the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

P.S. If we are going to be looking at the biblical calendar as a way that God deals with His people, then remember the Shemitah ends on September 13, and the year of Jubilee starts on September 23rd. I encourage you to be believing for great things!

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