

Is a Spiritual Hurricane Katrina Headed Our Way?

When I lived in Atlanta, my favorite restaurant was Fuddruckers. I could get an inexpensive and healthy meal plus have a good chat with my manager friend.

One day, he told me something that I've never forgotten.

He told me he grew up in New Orleans and that every single year for decades, he heard the same thing: "The weather forecasts are ominous this time. The levies are going to break. Wisdom dictates it's time to get out of town!"

Then my friend he paused to recount the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and how many people were totally unprepared because they merely shrugged off the warning. "As it was in the time of Noah ..." still comes to mind.

Are we in a similar situation as we witness the meltdown of our culture amid widespread indifference or ignorance when there should be a true sense of urgency?

Living in **post-Christian America**, where mind-numbing statistics and rampant immoral activities are commonplace, isn't it time we wake up and smell the coffee? I submit to you that this time it's different—that God is telling us this is not a time for business as usual!

Lessons From Jeremiah

If you pull out a Bible commentary on the book of Jeremiah, you'll see these themes:

- Warnings ignored
- Lost opportunities
- Widespread detestable practices and lewd acts
- Mutilation of God's Word

- False shepherds declaring peace and failing to distinguish between the holy and unholy
- Rejection and persecution of God's faithful messenger

Jeremiah spoke for more than 20 years, trying to awaken the people to what was happening in their midst so they could avert the judgment that was coming with force and speed. Instead of realizing "This time, it's different," they dismissed the prophetic red flags while maintaining their religious services and staying comfortable in their sin. Then judgment fell, and the people of God found themselves ensnared in 70 years of captivity!

I am convinced something catastrophic and cataclysmic is coming our way. This is not the time to ignore that scratch in our spirit, as our time is rapidly running out. Rick Warren is blowing a trumpet and declaring the following: "Civilizations have a beginning and an ending point. America is already passed what historically is that end point."

Before I communicate what I believe God is saying as a merciful, long-suffering Father who usually gives us a seed of hope amidst a dire alert, let me cite a few other specifics to get our attention.

Billy Graham, who turns 95 next month, is trying to get people to turn their attention away from what he calls a "trendy faith and designer religion." He and his ministry team have launched a major gospel outreach slated for next month because he sees America in a "sea of immorality," where we have "dismissed God, resulting in skewed thinking and consciences that are desensitized to right and wrong."

Josh McDowell, now 74, is a friend who has written 115 books as a Christian apologist. Citing the "perfect storm" that we are now experiencing, he blew a trumpet in Charlotte, N.C., last weekend challenging pastors and parents with this wake-up call:

"Pastors cannot pastor the same way they have been for the last 20 years. Parents cannot raise their children the same way they were raised, because the Internet has changed everything.

"Twenty years ago, the phrase was 'If you don't reach a young person by 18, you probably won't reach them.' Now atheists, agnostics and pornographers have the same access to your kids as you do. It's just one click away. ... Now if you don't reach a child by their 12th birthday, you won't reach them!"

What Must We Do?

1. Stop living in denial and wishful thinking.

It's tempting to think, "These things are cyclical," and, "America always finds a way to come out on top."

Here's the deal: This time it's different! Judgment begins in the house of God, so unless we repent, truly turn to God, intercede for a divine intervention/awakening and wholeheartedly return to a robust biblical faith, the United States as we have known it is coming to an end.

2. Acknowledge we may be living in the days of the great apostasy.

Jesus warned of a time when "many will turn away from the faith" (Matt. 24:10, NIV), and Paul wrote of a great **apostasy** that would precede the return of our Lord (2 Thess. 2).

Examining what is being endorsed, celebrated and taught in certain denominations, Bible schools and seminaries today, let's recognize what we were warned about in 1 Timothy 4:1: "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."

3. Repent of our waffling, spineless, "evangellyfish" approach and stand up and speak out.

Those of us who are privileged to be called leaders in our homes and churches must especially do this. We must repent, and we must speak out in a compassionate yet clear way about the moral and cultural issues of our day.

The Rev. **Charles Finney**, a leader during the time of the **Second Great Awakening**, reminded ministers in his day of the following: "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 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. Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren, but let us lay it to heart and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation. "

Scripture teaches that pastors are called to be "watchmen on the wall." Amidst all the compromise and blatant immorality both in the church and in the world around us, let every leader rise up in bravery and refuse to be silent, no longer fearing the loss of a tax-exempt status. Here's a little-known fact: No church in America since the IRS regulation of 1954 was put into effect has ever lost its tax-exempt status.

If a little teenage Pakistani girl can stand up and say it's time for Muslim girls to gain an education, be shot in the face by the Taliban, and then rise back up and say, "If you don't speak up now and fight now, you will be cowards forever and slaves forever," how can we do less who have the Spirit of the living God indwelling us?

If Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** can stand up before the entire United Nations and make the bold

declaration, “Israel will not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons. If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone,” how can we do any less in the face of evil in our generation?

We are at the tipping point. We are also at the point where either we will experience a divine intervention of God and a **Third Great Awakening** or see the conclusion of history and the return of our Lord. Nobody knows, but here’s the deal: This time it’s different, and it’s time for every man and woman of God to not only stand and be counted but to do as Mat Staver, senior counsel for Liberty Counsel, says: “It is time to throw off the muzzle and put on the megaphone!”

Larry Tomczak is a best-selling author and cultural commentator with over 40 years of trusted ministry experience. His passion is to bring perspective, analysis and insight from a biblical worldview. He loves people and loves awakening them to today’s cultural realities and the responses needed for the bride of Christ—His church—to become influential in all spheres of life once again.