

Prepare the Way of the Lord

In March of this year, approximately a week after  the earthquake in Japan, I abruptly awoke at 1:23 a.m. I did not give it much thought, until I again suddenly awoke at precisely 1:23 a.m. the very next night. Knowing that the Lord was speaking through this prophetic sign, I carefully examined all the 1:23, 1:2-3, 12:3 and 123 scriptures in the Bible. I discovered in the 123 verses a clear prophetic message to America. The first thing that caught my attention was that two of the 123 scripture passages in the Gospels proclaim a sober message to prepare the way of the Lord, by making a straight path for Him.

John **1:23** says: "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, in order to prepare the way not only for an unprecedented, worldwide revival and end-time harvest, but also for Jesus' second coming. Therefore, judgment must first begin in the house of God, starting with the foundation—His apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (1 Pet. 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" (Lam. 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 (Eph. 4:11-12, 2 Cor. 5:20, Rev. 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 cowered from preaching on tithing and fasting or against adultery and fornication. Apprehensive of losing popularity, financial support and airtime, 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 not only have kept America spiritually lukewarm, but also have prevented revival fires from burning throughout our nation.

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