

# Responding to the Times

In the aftermath of the devastation of 9-11, coupled  with the series of severe and destructive hurricanes, historic Gulf oil spill, wars in the Far East, uprisings in northern Africa and the Middle East, and the devastating earthquake in Japan all happening in just the last few years, one is prone to ask many questions. In times of uncertainty, the “why” question appears in its many forms. But perhaps the question to be asking is not just “Why?” but “How?”

How are we to respond in such times? Difficult times come—whether it is in our own lives, or in a family, church, business, city or even nation.

But the basic principles remain the same no matter what sphere is confronted or needs to be addressed.

It is my personal conviction that as a nation, at 9-11 and even at the time of Hurricane Katrina, we did make a turn “toward” the Lord. How wonderful it was—even though for only a little while—to see churches opened for prayer, special rallies held, even stadiums filled in a couple of cities with prayer and worship. Tears flowed. Compassion was expressed. Humanitarian aid poured in. Life as we knew it halted for a moment.

But as a nation, we did not actually turn “to”

the Lord to be comforted and healed. *Toward* and *to* are entirely different responses. Seems to me a Band-Aid was put temporarily on our deep wounds, and most of us, even in the church world, have gone on with life as usual. What happened to applications of *carpe diem* ("seize the moment")?

### **A Radical Remnant Responds**

Of course, this is not the case of a radical remnant of believers who responded wholeheartedly to the times. Their lives will never go back to consumer Christianity; they have been changed into producers for the kingdom of God. Thank the Lord for all the prayer groups that have taken a place on the wall and the many ministries that have come to the aid of those in these many crises.

But, to be honest, even this cost-counting continuum seems to appear as a tiny peripheral portion of the church compared with the over all stagnant condition of the greater body of Christ.

What if these events have been only a dress rehearsal? What if there are more severe and devastating storms, attacks and crisis events coming? Have we learned anything? Author Francis Schaeffer asked ask the right question years ago: "How then should we live?"

### **Storm Warnings Have Sounded**

Times of shaking are upon us. There's no doubt about that one! But could it be that God's plumb line, as in the times of the prophet Amos, are being dropped in the midst of

the  
shakings?

The plumb line of God's unchanging Word and character is being dropped into the middle of the church, our nation and the other nations. Do we measure up? What chiropractic adjustments must be made in the body of Christ and the country to achieve the fullness of His purposes in this *kairos* moment?

Storms, times of shaking and turbulence, wars and rumors of wars, conflicts, terrorism: all these are on the rise. What lies ahead? How do we respond? How do we prepare as we see more storms coming?

Storms seem to take on three forms, whether they are in our personal lives or the world in general:

### ***Storms of Consequences of Sins***

**Our needed response:** Desperate, true repentance expressed with humility and lack of defensiveness. A realization that we do reap what we sow, mixed with a foundational belief in the grace and goodness of God. Turn 180 degrees to the Lord and ask for His help to change.

### ***Storms of God's Judgment***

**Our needed response:** A desperate cry for mercy, with brokenness and tenaciousness, is required while seeking the Lord's face for forgiveness. Seek discernment and wisdom. Give Him first place in all things, remembering mercy triumphs over judgment.

## ***Storms of Dark Demonic Attack***

**Our needed response:** Cleansing

from any “common ground” issues with the enemy, followed by desperate, authoritative intercession in which we exercise bold faith

in the name of Jesus over the powers of darkness. Cultivate thankfulness, keep perspective and praise the Lord at all times.

Each storm in life requires a different biblical response, but in one way each storm requires the same response:

*desperation.*

Ultimately, when surrendered to God, every storm can be used redemptively for God’s glory, and can work together for His purposes and even forge character in us.

## **Calling Forth Intervention in Perilous Times**

There is no period in history when extreme prayer hasn’t been in the forefront of the purposes of God. In fact, in

every revival the Lord always calls people to start praying first.

Prayer extremists do not hold back, but rather cry out in desperation

for God to visit them, change them, deliver them and set free those

in captivity. Extreme results are preceded by extreme prayer.

History

bears this out. Why should this generation be any different?

Authentic revival comes forth when God’s people let their hearts be filled with what is in God’s heart. They open their

eyes; they get involved. They let the sights and sounds of pain get

into their inner-most being. The agony and oppression of a

people

grip these true believers, and they cry out like women in travail.

Isaiah gave us such an example of persistent petitioning:

1. *Present your case, the Lord says, bring forward your strong arguments. ... Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place (41:21-22).*

2. *I have kept silent for a long time, I have kept still and restrained myself. ... Now, like a woman in labor, I will groan, I will gasp and pant (42:14).*

3. *For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow (62: 1-2).*

4. *I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth (62: 6-7).*

If it was good enough for Isaiah, then it's good enough for me!

## **How Should We Respond?**

Can we yet seize the moment to be enforcers of the kingdom? Can we stir ourselves to action and actually live the book of James where our works match our faith? Can we have the spirit of Issachar upon us and actually discern the times and the seasons and know how to live?

I say yes! Let's take our intercessory stand on the wall, stir up the grace of compassion and do the works of Jesus.

Let's get the whole prophetic movement out of conferences-only mode and thrust into prophetic evangelism, in which the sick are healed, demons are cast out and good news is proclaimed to the captives.

What time is it? It's time to seize the moment.

**About the author:** James W. Goll is the co-founder of **Encounters**

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