

These Are Words We Never Want to Hear God Say

It's common to hear evangelists encourage lost people wandering in the darkness of hopelessness by saying, "It's never too late."

While it is true that anybody who desires to surrender their lives to the love and leadership of Jesus will be welcomed with open arms, it's not true that it's *never* too late. If we want to return to God now, it's because the Holy Spirit is drawing us. There can come a time where our rejection of God will be respected, and the drawing will cease.

I've taught previously on the very interesting and troubling topic of *a great delusion*. Due to repeated wickedness, there comes a time when people are given over to a debased mind, to a delusion:

"... even him, whose coming is in accordance with the working of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love for the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:9-12, MEV).

"And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not proper" (Rom. 1:28, MEV).

Isaiah was commissioned to prophesy this very thing—that eyes would be blinded to truth.

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send

me.' He said, 'Go, and tell this people: "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn and be healed.'" Then I said, 'Lord, how long?' And He answered: Until the cities are laid waste without inhabitants, and the houses without man, and the land is utterly desolate" (Is. 6:8-11, MEV).

How strange (and troubling) it is that God would do this. In His wisdom, He opens and closes the window of opportunity for people to come to Him.

Most often we presume people have until the day they die to turn to the Lord. This isn't the case. There are many who have been turned over to delusion. Eyes have been blinded. Others have committed the unforgivable sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. It's too late.

Many are nearing the point of no return, and for a significant number of them it will come well before they die. They will be spiritually hopeless, fully dead, possibly decades before an obituary is written.

This is a terrifying reality, and it should increase our urgency for intercession and evangelism.

Of course, only God knows who has crossed this line, and our job is to continue to contend for all. Additionally, we know that at other points in the book of Isaiah we see him prophesying eyes that see and ears that hear.

"I the Lord have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand, and will keep You and appoint You for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and those who sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Is. 42:6-7, MEV).

The reality remains, however, that many eyes will forever be closed, many people forever imprisoned in delusion.

Do Not Pray for the Welfare of This People

There can come a time personally when we cannot return to Jesus.

There can also come a time when a nation cannot return—until its people endure everything necessary to bring them to repentance.

“Thus says the Lord to this people: Even so they have loved to wander; they have not restrained their feet. Therefore, the Lord does not accept them; He will now remember their iniquity and punish their sins” (Jer. 14:10, MEV).

The weight of this verse is almost too much to bear—and God meant for it to be that heavy. He declared in no uncertain terms that He does not accept them. He will remember their iniquity and He will punish their sins. It would seem to be the perfect moment for a prayer movement to launch, for a cry of intercession to shatter the heavens. Unfortunately, it’s too late.

“Then the Lord said to me: Do not pray for the good of this people. When they fast, I will not hear their cry. And when they offer a burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence” (Jer. 14:11-12, MEV).

From the Adam Clarke Commentary: “O, how dreadful is the state of that people in reference to whom the Lord says to his ministers, Pray not for them; or, what amounts nearly to a prohibition, withholds from his ministers the spirit of prayer and intercession in behalf of the people!”

Can you imagine, intercessors, gathering together with every intent to contend for our nation, when God then clearly

reveals that we are forbidden to pray? It will do no good. His mind is made up.

I know some of you might be thinking about Abraham's negotiations with God as he interceded fervently for Sodom and Gomorrah even as God was intent on destroying them. Can we not do the same if God reveals His plans for judgment on a nation? For those who are truly compassionate, they won't be able to help but to wrestle with God. With tears in our eyes, we would have no choice but to cry out for mercy. Sadly, in this account, it would have done no good. The clear command was that prayer was not to be made.

Lying Prophets

In a spiritual culture like we have today, the common reaction to such a topic would be that God, in His perfect love, is smiling over the people and is ready to receive them back. The idea of God standing in opposition to those He so deeply loves runs counter to much of the faulty theology that's rampant today.

This scenario plays out as we continue in Jeremiah 14. Read this passage completely. The message is very clear:

"Yet I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Here the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" Then the Lord said to me: The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them nor have I commanded them nor have I spoken to them. They prophesy to you a false vision and divination, and emptiness, and the deceit of their heart. Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name though I did not send them, yet they say, 'Sword and famine will not be in this land.' By sword and famine those prophets will be consumed. The people to whom they prophesy will be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword. And they will have no one to bury them, not them, nor their

wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters. For I will pour out their wickedness upon them" (Jer. 14:13-16, MEV).

There are those who will reject truth for the sake of keeping people hopeful and happy. These lying prophets are everywhere today, and they will only increase, especially if our nation ever gets to the point that the people in this story did.

"Then the Lord said to me: Even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, yet My heart would not be with this people. Cast them out of My sight and let them go! It shall come to pass if they say to you, "Where should we go?" then you shall tell them: Thus says the Lord: Those destined for death, to death; and those destined for the sword, to the sword; and those destined for the famine, to the famine; and those destined for the captivity, to the captivity" (Jer. 15:1-2, MEV).

Adam Clarke explains the above passage (and the following verses in the account) well:

"God declares to Jeremiah that not even Moses and Samuel, whose prayers had been so prevalent, could divert him from his purpose of punishing so wicked a people, v. 1. Accordingly their captivity is again announced in a variety of images so full of terror, vv. 2-9, that the prophet complains of his own hard fate in being obliged to deliver such unwelcome messages, v. 10; for which too he is reproved, vv. 11-14. Immediately he appeals to God for His sincerity, and supplicates pardon, vv. 15-18; and God tempers His reproof with promising again to protect him in the faithful discharge of his duty."

A Quickly Closing Window

America is not at this point of no return—yet.

There are movements of holiness, revival and passionate, devoted intercession growing from coast to coast. Awakening is

happening.

However, I don't believe these movements are currently strong or numerous enough to outpace the movement of wickedness that's both in the world and in the church today.

What this means is that the window of opportunity is quickly closing and if we don't exponentially increase our efforts, judgment very certainly will come to us.

If judgment does come to America, I believe God will preserve the remnant, radically devoted church as He promised to Jeremiah and as He did at Goshen with the Israelites.

"The hail struck all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast, and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail" (Exo. 9:25-26, MEV).

This isn't a time for fear, as God's own will be protected (though this doesn't mean hardship or persecution won't come). This is a time to be marked by tears, just as Jeremiah was.

"Oh, that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. 9:1, MEV).

Don't listen to the lying prophets who are saying that all is well and no judgment will come.

Do rend your hearts.

Do contend for revival.

Do pray, while there is time, before God tells us that we can pray for our nation no more. {eoa}

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messenger, and revivalist. John has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he has planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer- and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called the School of Prayer. John's mandate is to call the church in the nations to repentance from casual Christianity and to burn in a manner worthy of the King of kings. He is equipping people to confront the enemies of God (established religion, Jezebel and so on) that hinder an extreme, sold-out level of true worship.

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