

SACRED ASSEMBLY S02 AMERICA'S TIME OF VISITATION HAS COME

I. THE PERFECT STORM IS BREWING

A. Scripture describes the *unique dynamics* in the generation of the LORD's return as *great* and *very terrible* (Joel 2:11, 31; Mal. 4:5; Acts 2:20). The Church experiences the *greatest revival* in history during the *most severe crisis* on earth. Both light/darkness and wheat/tares will increase together (Isa. 60:1-2; Mt. 13:30, 39).

Joel 2:11 For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?

B. When asked about "signs" preceding His return, Jesus likened 11 major trends to "birth pangs" that would be universal, simultaneous and discernible (Mt. 24:4-8; Mk. 13:5-8; Lk. 21:8-11). Like the ebb and flow of natural contractions they will increase in frequency and escalate in intensity. They are meant to awaken the Church to wholehearted devotion and faithfulness in our assignment in preparation for the Day of the LORD.

Mt. 24:4 "Take heed no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name... and deceive many 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes... 8 All [11 of] these are the beginning of sorrows [lit. birth pangs]"

1. The 11 "sign trends" are: *mass deception, propaganda wars, ethnic conflict, international warfare* (economic warfare, lawfare, bioweapons, etc.), *famines, pestilences* (e.g. COVID-19), *great earthquakes, troubles* (roiling water or mobs Mk. 13:8), *commotions* (chaotic disorder Lk. 21:9), *fearful sights* (terrorist activity Lk. 21:11), *great signs* from heaven (Lk. 21:11). See also Psalm 2:1-3.

2. Due to unfamiliarity, new mothers often experience contractions long before realizing it. In our immaturity, could we be missing the very signs Jesus gave His people to help us prepare for His return?

3. The pressure of crisis *exposes* the hidden things just below the surface of our hearts in times of ease and *expedites* our response (Ps. 107; Mal. 3:2-3; Eph. 5:27; Heb. 12:25-29). As in natural childbirth these "birth pangs" aren't designed to *hurt* the Church, but *help* the Church give birth (Isa. 66:8; Jn. 3:6).

Mal. 3:2 He is like a refiner's fire... 3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold... that they may offer... an offering in righteousness. (Eph. 5:27)

C. Four "eschatological crosswinds" or trends will converge in *fullness* to create the "perfect storm" that brings in the great harvest of souls, comprised of Jews and Gentiles out of every tribe (Hag. 2:7; Am. 9:12; Acts 15:17; Mt. 24:14; Rev. 14:14-16), brings forth a glorious Church in unprecedented unity, purity and power (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Rev. 19:7; 22:17) and brings down everything in disagreement with God's loving will, as He establishes an unshakable kingdom on the earth (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 12:25-29). The four trends are *creations groan* (Rom. 8:22), *man's sin* (Dan. 8:23), *Satan's rage* (Rev. 12:7-9, 17) and *God's zeal* expressed in both glory (Acts 2:17-19) and judgment (Hag. 2:6-9; Rev. 15:1).

D. Jesus likened this timeframe to the "days of Noah," in which God orchestrated an unprecedented worldwide shaking with no solution apart from Him to remove everything in disagreement with His will.

Lk. 17:26 As in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came...

SACRED ASSEMBLY S02 AMERICA'S TIME OF VISITATION HAS COME

II. THE VICTORIOUS CHURCH JESUS IS BUILDING TO PREVAIL IN THE COMING STORM

A. As God instructed Noah to build a very specific, life-sustaining *ark of safety* to deliver all those with “ears to hear” (Gen. 6:14-16), so also Jesus is building a very specific, life-sustaining ark of safety that will not just *endure*, but *prevail* through the coming storm. *Good news! He is the architect of both storm and salvation.*

Mt. 16:18 On this rock [v.16] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys [i.e. authority] of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

1. Prior to Jesus’ return, the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit will occur in every nation, resulting in a radiant Church filled with God's glory and operating in the prophetic beyond any time in history (Mal. 1:11; Isa: 42:10-13; Jl. 2:28-32; Mt. 16:18; Jn. 14:12; Acts 2:17-19; Eph. 4:13; 5:26-27; Rev. 15:2; 19:7).

Acts 2:17 In the last days... I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams... 20 Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. ²¹ And... whoever calls on... the Lord shall be saved.

Eph. 5:27 That He might present her to Himself a glorious church... holy and without blemish...

2. The victorious Church will emerge in unprecedented unity, purity and power, including the miracles in the book of Acts and Exodus combined and multiplied on a worldwide scale (Mic. 7:15; Acts. 2:19; Rev. 11:3-6). The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all nations (Mt. 24:14; Acts 2:21; Rev. 7:9; 14:6).

Jn. 17:21 That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us... that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me...

3. Jesus called this Church His house of prayer, which speaks of our *eternal occupation* as a kingdom of priests who minister to God and release great governmental power by agreeing with *who He is* in worship (You are holy, beautiful, etc.) and *what He does* in prayer (Your Kingdom come, etc.). (Josh. 6; 2 Chr. 20:21-22; Isa. 25:9; 30:18-19; 42:10-13; 62:6-7; Mal. 1:11; Lk. 18:7-8; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5; 22:17).

Isa. 56:7 For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

B. Everything built beyond God’s divine blueprint will be destroyed in the intensity of the storm, exposing our personal preferences verses God’s non-negotiable commands (Ps. 127:1; Mt. 7:24-27; Lk. 6:47-49).

Ps. 127:1 Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...

C. Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) is our *personal blueprint* to build, whereas Jesus’ 7 Letters to the 7 Churches (Rev. 2-3) are His *corporate instructions* to best prepare for the coming storm. In addition, God gave us 30+ divinely inspired N.T. prayers (i.e. apostolic prayers), revealing the Church after His own heart.

Mt. 7:24 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who does not do them...

SACRED ASSEMBLY S02 AMERICA'S TIME OF VISITATION HAS COME

III. NOW IS THE TIME TO GET OUR HOUSE IN ORDER

A. There are unique times of evaluation in *every* believer's life when God *inspects our labor* and *reveals the quality of our work through testing*, leading to either increase or loss (i.e. pruning). (Jdg. 2:22; 1 Chr. 29:17; Job 23:10; Ps. 26:2; 66:10; Pr. 17:3; 27:21; Isa. 48:10; Jer. 6:27-30; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2-3; Mt. 4:1; Lk. 8:13; Jn. 6:6; 1 Cor. 3; 2 Cor. 8:3, 8; 1 Thes. 2:4; Heb. 3:8; 11:17; Jas. 1:3, 12; 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12; Rev. 2:10; 3:10).

Jn. 15:2 Every branch in Me... that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

1 Cor. 3:10 As a wise master builder I have laid the foundation... But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than... Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will... be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work... endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1. Notice the contrast between gold, silver, precious stones and wood, hay, stubble. Precious stones are produced underground, under great pressure over a long period of time. This speaks of the intensity of our transformation into the image of Christ in the secret place when no one is looking but God (Rom. 8:29).

Mt. 6:4 Your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. (Ps. 27:5; 91:1; Mt. 6:4, 6, 18)

2. Divine testing sometimes leads to temporary and even permanent falling away (Mt. 13:20-21; 26:31-35, 69-75; Mk. 4:16; Lk. 8; 22:31-34). This is why we are to regularly test ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 6:4).

Lk. 8:11 The seed is the word of God... 13 The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of testing fall away.

3. Jesus is the *only* tested stone that endured God's fire with flawless perfection. Appelles and Paul were also tested and found authentic (Isa. 28:16; Mt. 4:1; Rom. 16:10; 2 Cor. 13:6-7; 1 Pet. 2:4-6). Often we place value on quick, easy and cheap *externals* when God is looking for *internal* integrity and authenticity.

1 Pet. 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house... 6 "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

B. It is God's *mercy* that reveals our true condition *now*, rather than waiting until our final evaluation when we no longer make a course correction (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 2-3).

2 Cor. 5:10 We must all appear before the judgment [G968 *bēma* evaluation] seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (Rev. 2:23)

C. James and Peter both exhort us to *joyfully endure* the fire of testing (Jas. 1:2-4, 12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-19).

D. God prepared Peter for greater works through testing (Lk. 22:31-34; 54-62). America's time is now here!

Lk. 22:31 "Simon, Simon! Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

SACRED ASSEMBLY S02 AMERICA'S TIME OF VISITATION HAS COME

IV. AMERICA'S TIME OF VISITATION HAS COME

A. The “time of visitation” is a unique time of testing when God draws near to evaluate our corporate *response* to circumstances and *stewardship* of His resources (e.g. time, influence, wealth, favor, knowledge, authority, etc.). Every person and nation will be individually evaluated for their unique response to God (Mt. 25:31-46). Peter reminds us that judgment begins at God's House (1 Pet. 4:12-19). *God is looking at us!*

1 Pet. 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice... that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy... 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

B. In the transitional generation of Jesus' first coming, Israel came under judgment. They weren't judged for *just* being unresponsive, but for their continual rejection of God's ways and misuse of resources, leading to a lack of *preparation* and *response* to Jesus at His first coming in light of all God had given them (Rom. 9:4).

Lk. 19:41 He saw the city and wept... 42 “If you had known... the things... for your peace!... 43 Your enemies will... 44 level you, and your children... because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

C. How well has the Church in America built according to the divine blueprint of God's Kingdom? God will shake everything that can be shaken to remove everything in disagreement (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 12:25-29). To the degree we are walking contrary to Him, our hearts, families, churches and nation will be shaken.

Heb. 12:26 He has promised... “Once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 This indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken... that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

D. When God shakes a nation to awaken love, He's looking for *one response* – a wholehearted turning of the heart expressed through individual repentance and corporate gatherings of *sacred assemblies* (Joel 2:12-17). “Who knows” if God will *relent* and change His decree by sending blessing (1 Sam. 14:6; 2 Sam. 12:15-23; 16:12; Joel 2:14; Zeph. 2:1-3; Am. 5:14-15; Jon. 1:6; 3:9; Jer. 18:7; 51:6-8; Dan. 4:27; Hab. 3:16).

Joel 2:14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him... ?

E. Due to agreement with God there will be “pockets of mercy” where people, cities and geographic regions will be “hidden” or protected in shaking (Zeph. 2:3; cf. Ezek. 9:4-5; Am. 4:7; Hab. 3:16-19), like Noah (Gen. 6-9), Daniel, Job (Ez. 14:14), Israel in Goshen (Ex. 7-12), Rahab (Josh. 6:17) and the 144k (Rev. 7:1-8; 9:4).

F. Where there is no agreement with God's heart, will and ways He sends the fullness of judgment to remove rebellion in His timing (Gen. 15:16). However, in mercy the LORD seeks intercessors to stand in agreement with Him (Gen. 18:16-32; Ezek. 22:30), so that future judgment can be *averted* (Ex. 32:7-14; Num. 16:1-41; 16:41-50; Ps. 106:21-23; Jer. 18:7-8; Am. 7:1-6) and even past judgment might be *reversed* (2 Chr. 7:14).

Ezek. 22:30 So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.