



**“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God”** (1 Peter 4:17a)

I hear a lot of people saying we are seeing God’s judgment on the nations and upon the United States with the COVID19 Pandemic of 2020. I do not claim to know the infinite mind of God, but there are plenty of Scriptures that show God judging nations. God judged and cursed all of creation with the fall of Adam and Eve. He again did a worldwide judgment with the flood that killed all life on planet earth, but He saved Noah, his family and the creatures in the Ark! The prophets spoke to God’s chosen people (Israel) of coming judgments because of their sin and lack of repentance. God used wicked nations to come and destroy Israel -- again, *His chosen people*. He sent Assyria, Babylon, Persia, the Greeks and Romans.

God also sent Jonah the prophet to Nineveh, a wicked and perverse nation -- an idolatrous nation! The result of Jonah’s preaching of God’s coming destruction was that the whole nation, from the King on down, repented in sackcloth and ashes; and God relented because they humbled themselves before Him!

We have a tendency in the church to look outside of the church, point our fingers at the world’s wickedness, and blame our problems on the government, the economy, politicians, etc... But Scripture tells us that the world is cursed, fallen and that man is exceedingly wicked and rebellious toward holy God. The world is always going to behave this way! But, God’s people shouldn’t. Christ’s church should continually practice Psalm 139:23-24 to ensure we are not being rebellious toward God. [Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.]

God is interested in the spiritual condition of His people, and we see in both the Old and New Testaments that Judgment starts with the house of God! In Ezekiel 9, God saw that His people (including the leadership) were idolatrous, wicked and secretly and openly worshiping other gods. So, God told the Prophet that He would send an angel to “utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary. So they started with the elders who were before the temple.” God started His judgment on His people, *and He started in the Temple* with the elders who were over the House of the Lord!

As the people of God go, so goes the nation! As the church goes, so goes the nation! The Scriptures show that God brings judgment on His people to humble them and to bring them to repentance. In the New Testament we see in 1Peter 4:17 “For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” I believe we need to start looking at the need for the church to do some real serious self-examination. If judgment starts with the house of the Lord, is it not interesting one of the immediate outcomes from the COVID19 Pandemic is that God (Yes! He did this. He is sovereign) shut down the meetings of the church across the entire planet! Let that sink in deep. As brother Paul Washer has stated several times in His sermons, that the greatest day of blasphemy during the week is on Sunday morning in many of the Evangelical Churches across the land.

What is the church going to do with this obvious knock on the church’s door? I hear church people saying “*I can’t wait until things get back to normal!*” **Did we ever think that maybe God isn’t happy with our Normal?** The Lord knocked on the church’s door on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, and she failed miserably to recognize the opportunity to humble herself and repent. How will she fair this time around? There are two things that are great gifts from God to *His people (the real regenerated church)*: the gifts of repentance and faith. The two go together for both salvation and sanctification. We cannot work up or self-create either of these gifts. They must come from God!

We love to quote from 2 Chronicles 7:14 concerning repentance, but we need to know it in context to fully grasp what God is asking of us.

Let us look at 2 Chronicles 7:12-15 -- “Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name *humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways*, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.”

The first thing we see is that God sends Judgment on His people in the form of, no rain, locust and **PESTILENCE** (Corona Virus)! The Word clearly states that it is God doing this to get their attention. God was not happy with their **Normal!** What was their normal? The **Normal #1 Root Sin is PRIDE!** It is the root sin of Adam. So, God asks them to respond to His judgment with humility. Also out of the Root of Pride comes **Normal #2: Prayerlessness!** The prayer meeting is all but gone from most of the Evangelical Churches. If there is any prayer it is for Aunt Nellie’s knee and not a heart wrenching prayer for lost souls to be regenerated. A pastor once told me prayer was inactivity ...that we need to be out doing something instead of prayer! **PRIDE** as well as Unbelief and Selfishness! **The three ROOT SINS inherited from Adam are PUS: PRIDE; UNBELIEF; SELFISHNESS!** **Normal #3 is that we do not seek intimacy with God!** **PRIDE AND SELFISHNESS!** We seek His hand, but not His face. The American Church has become the church of the prosperity/entitlement, name-it/claim-it god with faith in faith and not faith in a God we know and trust intimately and submit to unquestioningly. **Normal #4 is no repentance.** We are prideful and don’t think we have any wicked ways to turn away from!

The great need for the American Evangelical church is for the gift of repentance to come back to God’s people. We think we are OK, but we have stopped listening to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit calling us back to a right relationship with God. We have become sin deaf! All these so-called Normals are a hindrance to God hearing our prayers! They need to be crucified from our flesh. They only lead to dead works which fill our churches. If anything we do is contaminated in any way with any one of these root sins, it is a dead work and will burn up at the judgment seat of Christ.

So we can stay in Normal mode; OR we can seek the Lord for the gift of repentance and faith and *maybe* He will forgive our sin and heal the land by sending us a word-centered revival, awakening and reformation of the church! Then this time will not be remembered as the Pandemic of 2020 but as the Great Awakening of 2020. Amen come Lord Jesus!

