

God's
LAST
WITNESS
of this age

JOY THOMAS



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A PEOPLE HAVING AN
UNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES

It is necessary to hear all that the Spirit is conveying to us so that we may really apprehend the anguish of His burden in these days. Though there are many things that are happening all around us in the name of Christ, the Lord does not want us to waste our time talking about what is happening in the Christian world, nor to be involved in any kind of research concerning the present trends and emphasis in Christianity. The Lord does not want us to focus on anything other than Christ. We have to be fully absorbed in seeing what is upon the heart of God. We have to use our spiritual eyes and not our natural eyes to see what is happening all around us. In the light and fellowship of the Son, we will surely be enlightened and changed.

While on the earth, the Son saw what was upon the Father's heart and this brought a great inward brokenness in Him. Truly, He was a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief. Jesus realized that His Father could not get what He desired from His own people.

Therefore, He was determined to give the Father whatever He expected from His life. He exposed the hollowness and hypocrisy of all the religious things of His day, through His own life and ministry. In the light of His example, let us not be fascinated or wonder-struck by some of the so-called spiritual things that are taking place in the world. They will be exposed but we need to learn to walk in the burden of the Spirit. As we discern the burden in the Spirit for the solemn assembly of His people, which is the Church, we too will begin to share in that burden. Eventually, the full burden of the Spirit of God for the reproach on the House of God will become our own burden. Let us exercise our spirits and receive the burden of the Spirit of God into our inward man in all reality. Let us be open and willing inwardly so that the Spirit can perform His work upon our lives.

“And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD. ...And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren

were at their commandment.” (1 Chronicles 12:23, 32)

NIV Bible says, “*men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do – 200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command;*”

Unlike other tribes, the men of Issachar were aware of the times in which they lived, and they knew what they ought to do at a time such as that. They volunteered to serve in the ranks in those crucial times. They joined David because the mind of God was to turn over the kingdom from Saul to David and to set up the throne of David in Israel (2 Samuel 3:10). It was a critical time in the history of Israel for it was a time of transition. But the Word of God says that the children of Issachar understood the times. They knew what Israel should do in those times.

THE WAY OF THE FAITHFUL REMNANT

We are at a critical point of time in the history of the New Testament Church. The final battle between light and darkness is

drawing near. Everything is moving towards the climax when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of God and Christ. At this crucial juncture in the history of the Church, many believers are being singled out by the enemy. They are picked off one by one by the prince of this world. The adversary seems to have no difficulty in doing so in these last days. But if our hearts are set towards the Lord and His purpose, and to be a part of his remnant in the earth, a part of His pure Body in the earth, then God is clearly giving us a word of warning and caution. It is necessary for our spiritual eyes to be enlightened to behold the Lord in greater dimensions in these days. If we are able to see the purposes of God in the fresh light of His word, then we may be able to understand the degree of apostasy, deception and falsehood that has entered the Church. Beloved, the reality is that the Church is being filled with doctrines of Baal and the traditions of man in these days.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;” (1 Tim 4:1-2)

The apostle Paul was a witness to the apostasy taking place in the churches in the first century. Right there, before his very eyes, seducing spirits had entered the church and captivated the people. Furthermore, he saw apostasy entering into the church in much greater measure in the last days for he wrote, “that the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to the seducing spirits and doctrines of the devil.” The apostle Paul had seen people who once had tasted of the fragrant ways God walking away from their faith. He was a witness of people who had walked in faith and strongly proclaimed their love for the Lord abandon their convictions to follow after deceiving spirits!

Beloved, we are living in the latter days that Paul talked about. The times that he predicted are upon us. The Church is filled with seducing spirits and the doctrines of devil. The Church has compromised with the world in every possible area. She has forsaken

Christ and made the world her partner. She has become prosperous and wealthy; the possession of material goods or materialism has become her maxim. The spirit of the world has gripped her and possessed her. She is in search of a good life like everyone else in the world. In every area of life, the Church only seeks to match and compete with common, secular, worldly ambitions. In short, today, the Church is in the same place as the Laodicean Church in the book of Revelations was (Revelations 3:14-22).

We need to note one thing carefully. **Regardless of the extent by which the Church has strayed away from the purposes of God, God will always have a people who will remain faithful to Him.** Be it the days of the apostle Paul or the present times, God has a people who remain faithful to the Lord and His purposes. They are those who weep and are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach upon the Church has become a burden. There are always a few who remain close to the Lord. They have a special understanding of the times in which they live.

They have an understanding of what they ought to be doing. God has always had a faithful remnant - though they have always been just a handful in number. They know what they ought to do because they know their God; they know He is with them always. Deep within, they know what is upon the heart of God. Regardless of how much the Church strays away, God always maintains a handful of faithful followers who know their God and are able to see what is upon His heart.

Over the centuries, God has always had a handful of people who have remained faithful, thankful and zealous for God, irrespective of the cost involved. They knew what they ought to do at every crucial turn of history. They had a deep assurance of knowing what was upon the heart of God. They knew the times because they were able to behold the Lord by their spiritual eyes. As we hear this word, May God open our spiritual eyes and may there be an impartation to our beings so that the Spirit can do a constituting work deep within.

Jesus not only had an understanding of His times, He had an understanding of the end times and of what will happen at the wrapping-up of the age. And He gave us a detailed description of what will happen in times to come and what will lead to His return (Matthew 24). To understand the times in which we live, we have to consider the general outline that the Lord presents in this passage.

The Lord has told us that great spiritual darkness will engulf the whole world. Darkness signifies religious deception, both in the world and in the Church. Thus darkness will be the hallmark of the last days or the days in which we live. The Lord said that false christs and false prophets will arise. Darkness will intensify and God's people will continue to be deceived. Deception among God's people will be widespread, beloved. Iniquity will increase as believers enter into greater measures of deception. As a result, the love of many shall wax cold. These are the signs of the last days. Who can deny that these things are already taking place today in some measure?

The Lord further told us that God's true people shall be hated by all nations. Do not take this lightly. I don't think we have come to this yet, but the Scriptures say that the enemy is going to get more and more powerful, though the Lord shall be with His own people. God's people will be hated and some will even be betrayed by fellow believers. Some in God's remnant church may even be put to death. Some of us will be called to suffer and go through terrible persecution, having been betrayed by our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Such shall be the signs of the last days! These are happening in some measure in the midst of God's people.

In the midst of the chaos and delusion, **there will be a remnant of believers, called the "elect" of God, who will ever remain faithful to the Lord.** They will be those who have beheld the Lord. They will say, "How can I be disobedient to my heavenly calling? How can I forget what the Lord has enabled me to hear and see?" They will bear the testimony of the Lord. Verse 14 of Matthew 24 shows us that the elect will bear the

testimony before the nations. The nations will hate them for bearing His testimony. Though the nations will hate them, they will still bear the testimony of the Lord - "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come". Then shall the end come. But before the end comes, there needs to be a remnant of God that will bear a testimony before the nations! This will happen, beloved. The Lord is preparing His remnant for this purpose. **Believe it or not, God has an underground church in every nation not only in China or in Islamic nations!** The remnant in every nation will bear the testimony before the nations. This is what Paul said to Timothy.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;" (2 Timothy 1:8)

In the days of which Paul writes, many were not really standing for the testimony of Christ. The Church, by and large, had adopted a position of compromise with the world. Beloved, if you are going to bear the testimony of the Lord in this age and be a part of that

remnant that will bear the testimony of Christ, then you will surely have to suffer many afflictions. Thank God for His precious elect today. And remember, you are called to be a part of that elect. Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of the Lord Jesus, but be amongst those who will bear His testimony before the nations.

Jesus said that the last days would be filled with evil. *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Matthew 24:21, 22)."* The Lord Himself says the days will be so evil that God would have to shorten them and if He does not do so, even the very elect would be deceived. The days will be terrible indeed! It will look as if the enemy is the victor, having gained a great victory in the end. Then at that darkest hour, when the history of the world would appear to be doomed to darkness, when spirituality would be at the lowest ebb and all would appear to have been lost, the Scriptures say that

Jesus will return in blazing glory. *Hallelujah!* Matthew Chapter 24 provides us the general outline of things that will happen in the last days. These are confirmed again and again by the Lord and also by the apostles in their epistles.

THE LAST WITNESS OF THIS AGE

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” (Matthew 24:37-41)

The Lord Jesus made another revealing statement concerning the last days, the days just prior to He returns in glory! He said *“as in the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”*.

Pause and think of what happened in the days of Noah! The people were very busy eating and drinking, giving in marriage and taking in marriage. We know this is true because Jesus Himself said so. The people of Noah’s time were caught up with the issues of life. Eating, drinking, and marrying are common issues of life. The people gave themselves to these common, everyday things, with no thought for the will of God, until the flood came and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be! How prophetic!

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;” (2 Peter 2:5)

The Scripture says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Noah was a witness and the testimony of the Lord in his time. **Noah was a witness both to and against his generation.** He bore a testimony in righteousness before the people and the nations for 120 years! But the Scripture tells us that no one listened to him. Can you believe this? For 120 years he bore a testimony before

the people! No one listened to him – no one repented, no one heard what Noah had to say! They just continued to live as they normally did.

One passage in the Scriptures from the book of Ezekiel has personally helped me a great deal. I have learned not to be worried about what people think about us in this walk with the Lord.

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.

So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”
(Ezek 33:6-8)

We are not to be concerned about how many will accept our testimony and our witness of the gospel. We are to be accountable to God. If God sends us to people, we are to declare

God’s message to those people. We will not know if they will forbear, hold-back or reject the message or testimony, but we would have done our bit, for what we do is unto the Lord. We will not be judged by the Lord according to the fruit of our efforts or the response of the people. We are to be responsible to the Lord in all we do. We are to be obedient to the Lord.

It seems that Noah had an unsuccessful ministry for 120 years! No one was saved through his ministry. He seems to have been defeated at every point! In the eyes of today’s evangelists, therefore, Noah was a most unsuccessful man, for none but his family was saved through his ministry. Noah’s obedient and righteous life did not result in anyone being saved apart from his immediate family! Today however, success and achievements are the main issues, the key points, and the crux for many leaders. They try to achieve success at any cost because they stand blinded to the reality by the adversary. **The present trend in the church world is that anything that is successful is the Lord and anything that**

works and brings good results is the Holy Spirit. They choose not to be guided by the Holy Spirit and instead turn to philosophy and reason as their guiding star. They forsake the Spirit and depend on their own soul to do God's work and bring good results. And all the while they believe that they are being led of the Spirit of God! Thus they compromise the Word of God in many ways. What a terrible deception? We can know what is true and what is false only when our minds are enlightened and renewed! Here was a faithful witness, a man of righteousness, who preached day and night for 120 years, but no one other than his own household listened to him. I thank God for his household. By listening to Noah they made all the difference to his ministry!

Life continued as usual for the rest of the people. No one repented! Life continued for them as normal until flood waters came! They continued to go to church on the appointed days in routine manner and returned feeling good about having done their duty. They continued to be satisfied doing their bit for the work of God in their city until the flood came

and took them all away. Beloved, the Holy Spirit has not included Jesus' views about the times of Noah in the Bible just for our general knowledge and information. God wants His remnant to be a witness to and against the present generation. We are to be a people such as Noah, a remnant that will be a witness and testify of the will of God, whether people hear us or not. **We are not called to be successful believers, but to be obedient to the will of God! The Lord Jesus was obedient to the will of the Father rather than being successful in His ministry!**

In Matthew Chapter 24, the Lord compares Noah's generation to this generation. The Lord will have a last witness upon the earth, for we read "*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*" The Lord must have a remnant, a last witness to this generation! And that remnant will not be a part of all that is happening in Christendom. They will not be a part of the perverted grace doctrine that is so prevalent today. **The will and work of God cannot be done by present**

day leaders by their healing, wealth and fulfillment of self 'delusion' or the prosperity deception or the great escape error! Neither will this witness be given by those who are caught up in this or any of the delusions that are overcoming God's people at this moment.

Those who are caught up in this or any of the delusions that are overpowering God's people at this moment can in no way be witnesses to the purposes of God.

The remnant will not be deluded by a healing ministry that only satisfies the self! It will not be deluded by the false promises of a ministry that emphasizes wealth and prosperity. It will not be a part of the error of escaping from the earth when the heat is applied by the enemy. This witness, this remnant company will be separated from such things by the mercies of the living God. They will be a people who will be able to behold the Son in their lives. They will know what is upon the heart of God. They will be caught up with the burden and the travail of the heart of the Lord. They will be able to overcome the delusion and the deception that is a common

feature of the present world. They will be a people who have been delivered from the traditions of men. Beloved, it is only such people who will bear a testimony in the earth for the Lord. Not only that, they will lay bare God's judgments and make them evident in the earth. This remnant of God will be the last witness of this age; they will bear the testimony of the Lord; they will also stem the coming wrath of the Lord that shall be poured out on the stubborn and rebellious people on the earth!

I am convinced in my spirit that the last witness of this age is the testimony of the Lord and the coming wrath of God. It is not a world wide revival! The testimony and witness of the Lord shall be borne by a holy remnant that has been purged and purified in the fires of God's disciplinary hand. We need to be a part of this precious, holy, remnant - a remnant that has beheld the Lord - a remnant that knows what is upon the heart of God - a remnant that has gone through the fires of His discipline. They will be those who know of His sorrow and experience His longings and

desires. They will become partakers of His travail. They will be ones who have been worked upon by the hand of the Lord so that they may bear His testimony and be His witnesses. **And as we have seen in Noah's life, though the Lord will bring forth a company that is purified in the fires of His workings, the nations and the church at large will reject them.** They will totally reject their testimony and witness. So do not look for spiritual success and achievements in the manner of the world but accept the ways of the Lord in all the afflictions that may come your way. These are days to yield ourselves to the workings of God. He will take us to the ultimate purpose He has for His people. What a tremendous calling rests upon each one of us!

WILL THE LORD FIND TRUE FAITH

Lord Jesus Christ asked His disciples, “. . . Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

This question should sober His disciples even today. This question should challenge

each of us. There are depths to this question that surface as we meditate on it. Thousands of years have passed since the Lord came and died for us and yet the matter of faith is still in question. Shall He find faith on the earth today is a serious and solemn question? Will there be some people who will have true faith when He comes again? Does this mean anything to us?

The question implies that true faith will be rare in our days. Beloved, this is not a loose statement of some itinerant preacher, but the word of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples. Shall He find faith on the earth when He returns? It is good to pause and think about His question in all seriousness. In spiritual circles today, there is a great emphasis on teaching concerning faith. One can say in all sincerity that in no age has the teaching on faith been more than it is today. Christian bookshops are full of books on faith.

The largest gatherings today are the ones where faith is the main focus of attention. On the face of it there appears to be a great

dependence on faith, but at the root of the lives of believers there is little evidence of true faith. In the midst of such an amount of faith preaching in these last days the Lord asks, "Will there be faith?" Was he wrong? Or was He true in what He said? Jesus was not exaggerating when He questioned His disciples; He was not misinformed about the last days; He was not mistaken about His judgments. Beloved, when the Son of Man comes again, faith will be a rare among believers on the earth. This is the truth and we need to accept His word rather than the words of men. If so, what about all the faith that is being taught and preached today? How about those tall claims of faith preachers?

Jesus asks His disciples even today whether any amongst them will have faith when He returns. Will there be any one who yearns for His return? Will some be found waiting for Him with a desire to be like Him? Will there be some people who cleanse themselves so that like Him they would be found pure and perfect? Will there be any one on the earth who is prepared to meet Him when He comes

again?

There are many who would loudly shout Maranatha! Jesus is coming back again! There are many who brashly state that they will have a worship meeting the following day, if Jesus perchance did not return before the meeting! Let us not be carried away by such tart religious expressions, for such statements do not really talk of deep and abiding faith.

The one who has faith is the one who purifies himself in the hope of His coming soon. *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:3)."* When Jesus asks us, *"Will I find a people like that on the earth?, He is really asking whether He will find a people who are being purified and changed, praying in the spirit building up the most holy faith?"* Jesus asked His disciples whether there would be anyone in the earth like that. Let us not say that come what may, we will not fall away from the faith. We are living in days when many will depart from the faith and turn to worldly spirits. Let us not be deceived by statistics presented by evangelists. Let us not

be taken in by the number of Bibles being sold or Christian literature being distributed etc., by growing number of groups mushrooming in every street corner of the city. What is to be seen is how much of Christ is seen in believers on the earth today.

If our hearts are able to see what the Spirit is revealing, then we will be men of sorrow and weep for all that is happening. Listen to God! Hear Him by the Spirit! Let your spiritual eyes be opened that you may experience Him in the depths of your beings and be aligned with His burden in this hour. This is something that we all should experience.

“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.” (Daniel 8:9-12)

The NIV is more explicit.

“Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It (i.e. the horn) set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did and truth was thrown to the ground.”

This passage concerns the vision of Daniel about the anti-christ and what he will do in the last days. Please do not get fascinated with some of these words, but get to know what God wants to say to us. The evil one, the horn, will set up himself to be the Prince of the Host (who is the Lord Jesus Christ) and take away the daily sacrifice! The NIV says

that the horn will set up itself to be as great as the Prince of the Host and the place of His sanctuary will be brought down. **The 'place of His sanctuary' refers to believers.** They will be brought down. **The anti-Christ will become so brazen in the last days that he will try to usurp the place of God in the life of believers. Is this not what is happening today?** The enemy is deceptively taking God's place in the lives of His people. Though Christ should have the first place in the life of a believer, the enemy is active in usurping or taking over His place in one way or another. The enemy is making a grab for the place of God in the life of believers. **Taking away the daily sacrifice - refers to making the true gospel void by false teachings.** It means perverting the true gospel to such an extent that it becomes another gospel. **The enemy is removing the daily sacrifice. This is why most of the TV Evangelists and teachers do not get to speak about the need for believers to take up the cross and follow the Lord Jesus.** No popular preacher today preaches about taking up of the cross daily and following the Lord!

The cross is negative to many of these positive faith teachers! The apostle Paul said that the cross is foolishness to the Greeks! **If preachers ever talk about the cross today, it is only to receive the benefits from the cross on which Christ died. However, they do not ever preach the same cross that the Lord told His disciples to take up every day!** If some do talk of the cross, it is in the realm of doctrine only and not life. O beloved, the daily sacrifices have been taken away and the place of His sanctuary has been brought low. This vision of Daniel has become real; it is taking place in every nook and corner of the earth. May the Lord open your eyes!

One of the proofs that the 'horn' has entered the sanctuary today lies in the fact that the truth is being cast down to the ground in the lives of believers and in the churches. *"It prospered in everything it did and truth was thrown to the ground."* The truth is being dashed to the ground. The truth has fallen to the ground in many lives. Paul told Timothy that he needed to hold fast to sound and hygienic words that he had heard.

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus”. (2 Tim 1:13)

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” (2 Tim 4:3)

The word ‘sound’ is from the Greek word HUGIANO, which is the root word for the English word ‘hygiene’. In other words the apostle Paul tells Timothy to hold fast to hygienic words and healthy words that Timothy had heard from him. People depart from healthy and sound words. It is sad that those preachers who reprove with sound words, defend the faith with sound words, and separate themselves from others, are considered out of step with what is going on in church world today. That is the tragedy today! **Sound scriptural teaching has become as worthless as empty candy wrappers which are tossed into the street!** That is why many of us are questioned and received with much suspicion. Nobody wants to hear sound words. If we preach and live by the sound words of Scripture, even our own kith and kin would consider us crazy. Beloved, the truth is that

believers, by and large, do not want to hear sound words today. Even Timothy had to be cautioned by the Apostle. How much more has truth fallen to the ground today! **In many churches today the truth is thrown to the ground, it is cast down in favor of fictitious, exciting fables of adventurous evangelical activities.** Paul’s words to Timothy were to hold fast to sound words.

THE REBELLION OF GOD’S PEOPLE

One of the most important statements in the entire Bible concerning the anti-Christ states, *“It prospered in everything it did.”* God allowed the evil one to prosper in all he did. **The little horn, the anti-Christ will prosper in everything in the last days.** The implications of this unpleasant reality are sobering. Many do not understand. Today there is a feeling among Christians that they should prosper in whatever they do. The Scripture says that the evil one prospered. In other words, Daniel declares that the anti-Christ will succeed in whatever it does in these days! There is ample evidence to suggest that the anti-Christ is setting himself against the

Lord in the very life of His people. He seems to be succeeding in his attempt to overcome the host of saints. He will succeed in setting himself up as the Prince of God's people, he will succeed in attempting to remove the daily sacrifice, he will succeed in casting down the place of the Prince's sanctuary, and he will succeed in his attempt to overcome the host of saints! And thus he will succeed in his attempt to cast the truth down to the ground. It grieves one to see that the Lord will allow the anti-Christ to succeed. Why does the Lord allow him to wreck, smash and destroy His people? Why does the Lord allow him to play such havoc amongst His people?

Beloved, **there are several reasons for this, but the main reason why the Lord allows the anti-Christ to do these things is because of the rebellion of the sanctuary (believers) and the priests who minister in it! There is a rebellion in the very sanctuary of God's people.** Daniel said that the host of the saints gave in to the little horn because they rebelled against God! The ministers and the people have created a rebellion against the Lord.

The host of saints is subjected to the little horn because of the rebellion in the sanctuary of His people. What a tragedy? Is this not identical to what happened in the Old Testament when the children of Israel defiled the Temple of God? They defiled the land by worshipping other gods? They never loved the Lord and His purposes as they ought to and so God allowed the evil one to take over! God handed them over to the Babylonians because of their rebellion. O how tragic this is! It breaks the heart!

There is so much rebellion all over the world today, more so in the house of God and in our own lives. This is the catastrophe that is overtaking God's people! **The rebellion of God's people against the Lord is the only reason why the enemy prospers in all he does.** Today God's people are being grossly deceived in all they do because of the rebellion against God in their hearts. They refuse to listen to God's voice and regard His wholesome counsel with disdain. In their rebellion they want to accommodate the provisions of their flesh and their self.

“Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city!

She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God.

Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.” (Zephaniah 3:1-4)

Do not these verses exemplify the condition in our churches? Who wants correction today? In the church, the last thing people want is correction. Some of us think that we are far from being rebellious; we imagine that we are nothing short of being good children of the Lord and fully obedient. But here we see that God’s people did not obey His voice and received not His corrections. Let us examine our lives to see if there is any rebellion within by observing whether we fear correction or not. Fear is the key. If our hearts cry out to be a part of His true church today then we will not fear correction. There is no other way for us to draw near to the Lord. Today people shift from one church to another because they fear discipline and correction, but they do not

fear the Lord. A father lovingly corrects his son. The Bible says that the heavenly Father corrects the son of His love. The son whom the father loves receives correction. That is love. Only loving fathers correct their sons. Many times when we are corrected by the Word or the counsel of God, we feel that love has fled the house. May God help us to understand the heart of a loving Father for His son.

If there is even the slightest trace of rebellion in us, we give room for the little horn to operate in our lives. In churches all around the world, the reality is that the little horn is active in operation. Deception is increasing every day and the reason is that God’s people openly rebel against the Lord through disobedience. Nobody today wants to take the voice of God seriously, because that would result in their being excommunicated from their home church. If they were to seriously obey God, they would not be able to continue their associations with many friends in other churches; they would not be able to be a part of their traditional church group or

denomination; they would not be accepted in the greater and wider religious circles. This is the fear that many have. This is what stops them from obeying the Lord wholeheartedly. They fear correction because it could lead to their being turned out from the social-religious groups to which they are linked. And this is why the churches are not able to draw near to God. *“She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.”*

The condition of God’s people towards the end of the age in which Zephaniah lived provides us a picture of our condition at the end of this age! Zephaniah spoke of what the Lord saw in His people then and it is no different from what He sees in His people now! **Zephaniah’s words perfectly describe what today’s perverted doctrine of grace has produced!** God’s people today have also chosen to go their own ways, just like Israel in the Old Testament who refused God’s discipline and correction. May God help us to examine

our own lives in the light of God’s word.

Beloved, there will be a company of people who will usher in the coming of the Son of Man. This will be so whether you are a part of it or not. However, this is your sacred calling – to belong to the remnant of God in this hour. The Lord will have one last witness in the earth as in the days of Noah! You have the potential to be part of that. That is your calling! But it comes with a price tag! The Scriptures tell about them that loved not their lives until death! They were willing to be rejected, to be ill spoken of, and to be socially and religiously boycotted. They stood delivered from religion, from the doctrine of popular Christianity and from every tradition of man. They stood alone as ones who were misunderstood and abandoned by the systems of man. It all depends upon your decision and resolve in this critical hour. O the very flock of God is reeling under a great deception today. May God help you to see God’s purpose in this hour with your spiritual eyes.

Beloved, be like the sons of Issachar at this critical time! Waste not your life, time, energy, and opportunities in doing things otherwise. Let your daily sacrifice be unto the Lord and let Him have the first place in your life. Let Christ have the first place in your life. Let it not be usurped by the 'little horn'- the enemy of the saints. Many believers are experiencing captivity at the hands of the enemy. This is truly sorrowful.

They were zealous for God at one time, but somewhere, somehow, sometime, rebellion crept into their lives surreptitiously because they refused to hear the voice of the Lord. Somewhere they refused to receive correction; somewhere they trusted not in the Lord; somewhere they drew not near to the Lord. And the result of it all was that the enemy prospered! The enemy is truly prospering in many lives because of the heart-rebellion of God's children. How about you, dear child of God? It is time to open your heart to the Holy Spirit of God.

If you set your hearts towards God, you will know that the Lord is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. Beloved, let us long to be part of that last witness in the earth and then shall the end come!

Books By Joy Thomas

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