

THE URGENT NEED FOR BLACK LEADERSHIP IN THE PRAYER MOVEMENT

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CRISIS CONCERNING ISRAEL AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY – SAMUEL CLOUGH

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. When we speak of the black community we must clearly include all black believers, both those in Africa and those throughout the earth due to the African diaspora. The call to the black community to take leadership in the prayer movement is a global call because of the immensity of their role at the end of the age.
- B. Many leaders are feeling a prophetic urgency that the black community must take a place of primary leadership in the prayer movement.
1. This prophetic urgency must not be seen as a prophetic whisper, but as a prophetic shout due to the urgency of the hour.
 2. It is critical that we understand that this is not a good idea or another man-made attempt at reconciliation. This is a critical issue and there will be massive repercussions in the years ahead based on how we respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit
- C. The prayer movement at the end of the age will be from intimacy, with music, and for the harvest. The Lord has placed a unique gift and divine authority on the black community relating to music and to worship. At the end of the age the prayer movement will be in the context of worship and this unique gift is specifically designed to build the house of prayer.

From the end of the earth we have heard songs... - Isaiah 24:16 NKJV

- D. We must respond both in the place of intercession and in action. While action is necessary, intercession is more necessary. We fail to intercede over this issue because we fail to understand how truly critical it is.
- E. Man-made attempts at superficially uniting the races have caused many to ignore the call to unity. We must understand that, in this hour, the call for black leadership in the prayer movement is not a fad, a trend, or another man-made attempt at reconciliation, it is a critical once we understand the prophetic context that we are living in and the context in which the events at the end of the age will unfold.
- F. While we are going to primarily consider the eschatological issues surrounding black leadership in the prayer movement, we must be clear that the Lord strong desires racial unity in the church.
1. The racial separation in the church is a serious concern before the Lord regardless of the eschatological implications.
 2. The conflict between Jew and gentile is the origin of all racism, and from the beginning, the church was intended to be a miraculous demonstration of unity between the Jew and Gentile.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! – Psalm 133:1 NKJV

...where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. – Colossians 3:11 NKJV

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. – Galatians 3:28 NKJV

3. One of the greatest blights on the church is the initial racial divide that occurred as the gentile community of believers outgrew the Jewish community of believers and began separating from them and persecuting them as early as the 3rd century. This racism had profound implications for the church.
 - a. This separation is felt to this day in Jewish distrust of the very people that carry their own Scriptures. Beyond the blindness spoken of in the Scriptures, there is a resistance to Christians due to their experience of racism.
 - b. Even Christian theology suffered tremendously from this divide as the gentile church divorced itself from the Jewish context of the Scripture and sought to synthesize the Scriptures with other philosophical ideas.
4. While we want to examine the eschatological issues that surround black leadership in the prayer movement, we must acknowledge that the Lord truly desires unity in His church and our separation grieves His heart.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE PRAYER MOVEMENT

- A. Because we are considering the prayer movement specifically, we must understand why the prayer movement is exploding at this particular time in history. The prayer movement does serve the purpose of unifying the church, laboring for revival, and demonstrating the worth of Jesus; however, those are not the only reasons for the unique night and day prayer movement that is spreading rapidly throughout the earth. Without understanding the full context of the prayer movement, we will not have vision or strength to continue.
- B. A primary purpose of night and day prayer movement is for the crisis that will fall on Israel at the end of the age. The Scripture is very clear that night and day prayer will precede the end of the age. This contending prayer movement is both Jesus' global welcoming party and will also be required for the events that befall Israel at the end of the age.

O sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him. The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; Break forth and sing for joy and sing praises. Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, With the lyre and the sound of melody. With trumpets and the sound of the horn Shout joyfully before the King, the LORD. Let the sea roar and all it contains, The world and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, Let the mountains sing together for joy before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness And the peoples with equity. - Psalms 98:1–9 NAS95

Sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth...Worship the Lord...tremble before Him, all the earth...For He is coming to judge the earth. (Ps. 96:1-13)

O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. - Isaiah 30:19 NAS95

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the LORD...glorify the LORD in the dawning light, the name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!" (Isa. 24:14-16)

Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, They shout joyfully together; For they will see with their own eyes When the LORD restores Zion. - Isaiah 52:8 NAS95

Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, Before the decree takes effect — The day passes like the chaff — Before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you. Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger. - Zephaniah 2:1–3 NAS95

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. - Zechariah 12:10 NAS95

...now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth[A people crying out day and night]? - Luke 18:7–8 NAS95

When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints...Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake...The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. - Revelation 5:8; 8:3–5; 22:17 NAS95

- C. The Scripture is particularly clear that night and day prayer exists for God's purposes in Jerusalem. Isaiah 62 is very clear about the connection of day and night prayer with the urgency in God's heart to see all His purposes regarding Israel and Jerusalem come to pass:

For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. – Isaiah 62:1

I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem [for the cause of Jerusalem]; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. – Isaiah 62:6-7 NKJV

- D. Contending day and night prayer, which includes day and night worship and singing is a part of the end of the age. As the earth groans, so too the people of God in faith corporately groan for His appearing.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF ISRAEL AND THE COMING CRISIS

- A. Not only is night and day prayer significant for Jesus' appearing, it is required because of the magnitude of the events that are going to befall Israel, and the entire globe, at the end of the age.
- B. Much of the church has little or no awareness of the magnitude of the trouble that is coming for Israel. Many assume that Israel's troubles are mostly over because they are back in the land. The reality is that Israel's troubles are only about to escalate. The terrors of the day ahead should cause us to have difficulty speaking about these things without weeping.

Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble... - Jeremiah 30:7 NKJV

- C. Jeremiah 30-31 describes the time of Jacob's trouble, an unparalleled time of difficulty and suffering for Israel. Many assume this is past, when a careful study of Scripture reveals that the most terrifying days of Jewish suffering are in front of us.
- D. Jewish suffering will not only affect Israel, but it will become an issue throughout the entire earth. The issue of Jerusalem will affect the entire earth as the Jews are persecuted and driven throughout the nations of the earth. Throughout the earth Jews will be on the run and in hiding. What was seen in Nazi Germany was a graphic illustration of what is coming again as the end-time scenario unfolds.

And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples... - Zechariah 12:3 NKJV

- E. In the hour of their greatest suffering, God will be looking at the gentiles, the "wild olive branches that have been grafted in to the natural olive tree" to make provision for and suffer with the Jewish people in order to display His own unending love for Israel.

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles... For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? – Romans 11:11,25 NKJV

IV. THE PREPARATION OF A PEOPLE THAT CAN ENDURE CRISIS

- A. As the hour of trial for the entire earth approaches, the church must be prepared to endure crisis and pressure unlike any point in human history.

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. – Matthew 24:21-22 NKJV

- B. Since the prayer movement exists specifically for this time of great tribulation, and the many decades leading up to this time as the pressure begins to build, the Lord will prepare a people for this hour of suffering that are capable of enduring with strength.
- C. Particularly in the preceding centuries, people of African descent throughout the earth have endured great suffering and great trial. Because of this suffering, they have a unique history that the entire church is going to need in the hour of suffering to come.
- D. The history of the African people contains unique parallels to the story of Joseph. Like Joseph they have endured persecution, slavery, and being cast aside as a people group. Yet, like Joseph, in the moment of national crisis there are significant consequences if they do not rise and take their place of leadership on behalf of others to prepare for and endure the crisis.
- E. If the church is going to be prepared to endure the hour of suffering, it is critical that the black community take a significant leadership role to begin to prepare the church at large to endure the type of suffering that the black community has experienced over the last several centuries. The entire community of believers around the earth will soon experience the suffering that they endured simply because of skin color.
- F. At the end of the age, this racism will come to its zenith and we must understand that the root of all racism is the divide between Jew and gentile. However, persecution will not be limited only to those that are Jewish by blood though they will take the brunt of the suffering. Those who join themselves to Jacob in that hour will endure the suffering as well.
1. The African people have uniquely experienced the suffering that comes from racism on a global level and therefore have a great understanding of the suffering that will come as anti-Semitism reaches its height in all of history.
 2. Believers of all backgrounds, who join themselves to the Jewish people in this hour of suffering, will begin to experience the full weight of suffering that comes from racism. In this hour, believers of African ancestry have been uniquely prepared to lead the church with strength. Because they have borne the weight of suffering rooted in racism, they will be equipped to lead the entire church as it comes under the weight of racial suffering through faithfulness to the Jew.
- G. This is the hour for the black community to give the entire church strength to endure the persecution that is coming. If they do not their place of leadership the entire church will be unequipped for the eschatological suffering that is coming.

1. There is a call to black believers to receive the love and warmth of other areas of the church who are genuinely repentant towards the history of racism that has existed in many countries of the earth and was effected by many of their ancestors. Just as Jesus forgave those who persecuted Him, so too the black community must forgive so that they can take their rightful place of leadership across the entire church.
2. There is a clear call to non-black believers to have genuine love and sympathy for the suffering that the black community has endured. There is a tendency for non-black believers to over simplify the suffering endured by the black community and the issues it has subsequently faced because of centuries of slavery. This over simplification creates a barrier that prevents the black community from coming into their place of leadership over the entire church. *Love must become the preeminent value of non-black believers towards their black brothers and sisters.*

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal...Though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing...the greatest of these is love. – I Corinthians 13:1,3,13 NKJV

V. THE AFRICAN WITNESS TO THE JEWS AT THE END OF THE AGE

- A. Even as the black community is called to strengthen the entire community of believers at the end of the age, they are also uniquely called to minister to the Jew in the hour of suffering and trial.
- B. The African history of diaspora, suffering, and slavery has uniquely prepared the black community to minister to Jews in flight at the end of the age. Their shared history of suffering will enable them to minister to the Jews in a unique way.
 1. God has uniquely prepared the black community to serve Jews in flight during their hour of crisis.
 2. It is critical that the black community does not see its suffering only through an Afrocentric lens. Yes, God cares about the unique suffering the black community has endured, but the black community must see their own suffering as a unique preparation that allows them to minister at the end of the age in the way that others cannot. (This, of course, in no way justifies the suffering perpetrated on the African people, but rather it is God's glorious redemption of the wickedness they have endured.)
 3. The black community will only find full healing from the suffering they have endured as they see the incredible gift they now have that will be required at the end of the age. Though there are real issues within the black community that all believers should labor for, the black community themselves cannot allow their own suffering to cause them to lose sight of their call which extends fall beyond their own community.

4. A primary tool of the enemy at the end of the age will be to make the black community entirely self focused so that they cannot give their unique gift to the Jew and the church at the end of the age. The enemy knows how significant their role is to be and this is why he consistently wars against them coming into true freedom and releasing the power of their history of suffering to the church and, in a coming hour, to Jews in flight.
- C. It cannot be overlooked that both the African people and the Jewish people are known as a musical people. Isaiah 24:14-16 is very clear that, at the end of the age, amidst all the destruction songs will be heard from the ends of the earth.

From the end of the earth we have heard songs... - Isaiah 24:16 NKJV

1. As Jews are persecuted throughout the earth, the Lord will cause them to be sheltered by gentile believers who will be singing the very songs of Zion throughout the nations of the earth. In the very hour when the Jews feel least like singing, they will be sheltered by a singing people singing their own songs from the Scripture. This global singing will be a primary witness of Jesus to the Jews at the end of the age.
2. The black community has a unique gift for song and for music. Not only does the Lord intend to use this gift to fill the earth with prayer and worship in preparation for the Lord's return, He also intends to use it to minister to the Jews at the end of the age.

VI. ESCHATALOGICAL URGENCY

- A. We must always be clear that no one knows the day or the hour of Jesus return, but the Scripture is also clear that we will know the signs of the times as the end approaches. It is unbiblical to act as though we should not anticipate the end of the age or even watch for specific, biblical signs that the end is drawing near. The clear tone of Jesus' and Paul's writings is that we are actually in error when we do not recognize the times and seasons.

When you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! – Matthew 24:33 NKJV

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. Matthew 24:42 NKJV

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. – Luke 21:28

The Pharisees...came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven...Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. - Matthew 16:1-4 NKJV

Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you...But you, brethren, are not in darkness so that this Day should overtake you as a thief...Therefore...let us watch. - 1 Thessalonians. 5:1-6 NKJV

- B. Virtually all of the church recognizes the significance of Israel's return to the land beginning in 1948 and their occupation of Jerusalem in 1967. After 2,000 years of absence from the land, this was a stunning development that shows us very clearly that we have entered a different prophetic season on God's timetable.
- C. While most of the church recognizes there is great significance to the state of Israel, most of the church is still ignorant of the fact that the current state of Israel is not the full fulfillment of God's promises to Israel and a great suffering exists between what exists now and what God will establish at Jesus' return.
 - 1. As we have already noted, the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30-31) is still future and almost no one is preparing for it.
 - 2. The current state of Israel will not endure as it is and the Jewish people will experience another disastrous season of suffering that both the holocaust and the previous diaspora were precursors to. History did not crescendo during World War II. It is building to a crescendo.
- D. While the understanding of Israel's future suffering has been considered by many to be a fringe idea in the last few decades, not only is the church now growing in understanding of the coming crisis but the actual events that must come before the crisis are beginning to occur with frightening speed.
- E. In the last twelve months, virtually every Arab state around Israel has become embroiled in revolution. While these revolutions are often presented as movements for democracy in the western media, everyone knows that the end of these revolutions will always be a strict Islamic government.
 - 1. Both of Israel's great allies in the region have suddenly shifted course in the last year.
 - a. Turkey has gone from a quiet presence in the region that allied itself with U.S. interests to become very vocal against the state of Israel.
 - b. Egypt, a close ally of Israel, now exists without a real government and, barring miraculous intervention from the Lord, is set to transition to an aggressive Islamic government. Protests in the nation have included calls for a military march on Israel and an attack against the Israeli embassy.
 - c. Both Turkey and Egypt are now quickly becoming allies united against the presence of Israel in the region.
 - 2. Other surrounding nations are also rapidly positioning themselves to participate in an attack against Israel.
 - a. Iran has been very clear about its intentions to wipe Israel out of the land.

- b. The Palestinians have repeatedly refused moderate land swap proposals and are instead pushing for an internationally recognized state that will be one step to their plan of annihilating Israel. Palestinians have been very clear about their refusal to recognize Israel as a legitimate nation.
 - c. Smaller Arabic nations surrounding Israel are all in the midst of turbulence and revolution. As the dust settles in each nation, it will be the radical Muslims who will be in charge of each nation.
- F. The current turbulence in the Middle East is very clearly setting up a situation where Israel is surrounded with a hostility that is far more overt than what it has experienced in the last 20 years.
- G. When Israel begins to be overrun by Arabic nations and Jews again flee into the nations of the earth, most of the church who will have no understanding of what is happening will retreat into fear and confusion. Many will even lose their faith and fall away entirely because of unbiblical ideas they had about Israel and the end of the age.
- 1. We cannot know if these events are months, years, or decades away, but it is very clear that the Middle East is rapidly transforming to the point where the future suffering of Israel is no longer just an idea, but a reality. At this point, it only takes one nation to pull the trigger and a unified Arab coalition in the region could easily unite in military action against Israel.
 - 2. Very little remains, except for the actual military invasion, to set up the final scenario of Jewish suffering. This is no longer just a theological or eschatological idea for us to wrestle debate-it is reality on our evening news.
- H. When we understand the reality of our condition, we should tremble at the lack of understanding and, even great, the lack of day and night intercession for the issue of Jerusalem.
- I. In addition, it should fill our hearts with urgency for black believers to take their place in the prayer movement.
- 1. It is the enemy's scheme that black believers do not come into their place so that Israel will not be ministered to as the Lord intends in the final suffering.
 - 2. The black church and the Jewish predicament at the end of the age are intertwined and this is why the enemy wages such war against black believers coming into a place of leadership in a unified praying church at the end of the age.
 - 3. If he can prevent black believers from standing in their place and strengthening the church and ministering to the Jews at the end of the age, then he can affect far more damage in his rage against the church and the Jewish people.

- J. The issue of black leadership in the prayer movement then is not just an issue of racial unity, which is extremely precious to the Lord, but it has great eschatological significance. If we do not give ourselves to intercession and to action, whether we are of African descent or not, to see that the black community is established in her place of leadership we are ignorant of the times in which we live and lack understanding of how our actions now will have massive repercussions as the end of the age unfolds with greater intensity.
- K. The consequences of black believers not coming into the fullness of their destiny are massive. The scenario in the Middle East should make us tremble with urgency. The events of the end, though they may take decades to unfold, are upon us and yet black believers have still not been brought into their full place of leadership at the end of the age.
- L. The situation is not accidental, nor is it isolated. Let us labor with sobriety to see the black community come into their fullness and to see other believers recognize the awesome responsibility that believers of African descent have in the events of the end of the age. Let us labor with great love to see the fullness of God's calling for black believers come to pass.

VII. RESOURCES REGARDING THE ESCHATALOGICAL ISSUE OF ISRAEL

- A. MikeBickle.org – Thousands of searchable teaching notes available for free.
- B. *The Controversy of Zion and the Time of Jacob's Trouble* – Dalton Lifsey
- C. *The Holocaust: Where was God?* – Art Katz