

Dear Saint,

Enclosed you will find a sacred trust, a plan given by the Lord, because of His tender mercies and love for His children and His desire to see us return to Him with our hearts full of humble adoration and faithful obedience.

Our dear Lord is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8) and His precepts, His plans, His promises, and His provisions have never changed. When Moses gathered the elders together to share with them how the Holy One of Israel had not forsaken them, but was concerned for them, "they bowed down and worshiped" (Exodus 4:31) – our response should be no less when we consider how far we have fallen from God's original plan for this great nation. I have found that when the Lord allows you to enter in and experience His goodness and see His glory there is no other response then falling on your face in humble adoration of His overwhelming grace and mercy.

The message of God has never changed since the foundation of the world, and while the foundations of our world are shaken He remains steadfast and true (2 Timothy 2:19). The only way we can walk through the hostility and challenges that are aimed at and affecting the church, in increasing degree and intensity in the months and years ahead, is to return to the One who holds the world and all of eternity in His righteous right hand.

Throughout history, before any great war, the Lord poured out His Spirit of revival on the land to encourage His children to prepare themselves for the difficulty and challenges that lay ahead. It is when we return to seeking the Lord with all our hearts and rest in His strength and power, and not our own, that we find the peace we need to live.

This is an unprecedented time in our nations' history and it will take an unprecedented zeal for the Lord for the Church to not be led into extinction. It will only be through the faithful devotion to the Lord through the study of His Holy Word and prayer that we will experience the strength we need to persevere in the days which lay ahead (Acts 6:4).

There is none greater, or deserves our attention more, than our Creator - who desires more than all else that we desire Him. May we lay aside all earthly pursuits and all worldly concerns to make our relationship with our Lord and Savior our first and utmost priority. God is calling His faithful servants, the pastors, to "feed the sheep" the pure, unaltered, Holy Word of God and nothing else. (Hebrews 5:12-14).

This message was first written for pastors - for it was through men like them that this country was founded and built. What God begins, He completes (Philippians 1:6). May we again be strengthened through the reading of His Word and the empowering of the Holy Spirit to rise up and lead this nation back to the foundation that can never be shaken – Jesus Christ.

The name of Jesus is the only name that will be exalted and glorified - may we, with God's grace and guidance – return to our first love and seek Him "with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). And may heaven stand in silent pause at our response to His call to return, and may the world fall down in awe at the glory of God revealed in the lives of His faithful saints.

*Blessings and Peace,
Traci Alexander*

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." – Numbers 6:24-26

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

A PLAN FOR RESTORING THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF OUR NATION

PSALM 85



“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are becoming built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.”

- Ephesians 2:19-22

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Christ Jesus”
– 1 Corinthians 3:11

“See the stone I have set in front of Joshua!
There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,
says the Lord Almighty,
and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.”
– Zechariah 3:9

“Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription:
‘The Lord knows who are His’ and
‘Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.’”
– 2 Timothy 2:19-20

A Wake Up Call!

*“Are you still sleeping and resting! Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”
-Matthew 26:45-46*

On September 11, 2001, a plan was set in motion to attack the American people on four fronts: Our financial strength (the Twin Towers), our military strength (the Pentagon), our government (the Capitol), and our king (the President). The evil powers against us successfully took down the Twin Towers and considerably damaged the Pentagon, but their attempts to destroy the Capitol and the President failed. This failure was not a lack of strategy but the presence of a Divine hand of protection on our country.

The original temple of God was designed with two columns that flanked the entrance to the Most Holy Place. The one to the south was named Jachin meaning “He establishes”, and the one to the north was named Boaz meaning “in Him is strength.” When the Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to attack Jerusalem the walls of the city were torn down, the temple was set on fire, and the two pillars were broken up (2 Kings 25). God used the hands of evil men to discipline His wayward children. The events that took place on September 11th should have been a wake-up call to our nation of believers. Much like the idolatrous worship practices to which the Israelites fell prey, there has been a subtle influence of evil at work in our country, and it is stripping our nation of every last piece of Godly heritage upon which we have been built. We, too, have conformed to a standard that is less than holy. We have been given a clarion call from Holy God to wake up, and turn from our wicked ways, and return to Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The strength that we need is in God our Savior; but for generations now, we have conformed to a pattern in our land of seeking strength in those visible things we can see with our eyes. Our nation has been known as a country strong in the dollar and in our military; however, in one day the Lord allowed those two icons of strength to be targeted so we would open our eyes and see that He is our true strength. He is our kinsman-redeemer and He will be our protection if we will seek Him with all our heart. With His Divine power, He protected our Capitol and our President because He established them and has plans to use them as a tool for accomplishing His purposes in the land. “He sets up kings and deposes them” (Daniel 2:21).

The original intent of our founding fathers, when they established this great country of ours, was that we remain faithful to Almighty God. Their strong faith and desire to see a country built on biblical principles and a foundation of truth have enabled us to experience Divine favor of Holy God. Unfortunately, because we have lost sight of our original focus and become too comfortable in the land of promise, we have seen a rapid decline in morality and spirituality in the past 60 to 70 years. We are blessed to have a God who loves us and who desires to see His people accomplish what He has purposed for them to do. Our first and utmost priority is to seek God with all our heart, and He desires that we return to Him so that we can experience all the blessings that come from being in the center of His will and obeying all that He has commanded us. Let us not ignore this Holy call; if we return to Him now, we may see His hand relent, but if we do not, we will surely see His hand of judgment.

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

A Plan for Restoring the Spiritual Foundation of Our Nation

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old Foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.” – Isaiah 58:12

One Purpose – One Period – One Nation under God

Revive! Restore! Rebuild!

One Purpose – To Revive Us!

*“Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your Name.”
- Psalm 80:18*

One Purpose: To return to God with all our hearts and pursue Him with full devotion as He has commanded us to.

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and the greatest commandment.” - Matthew 22:37-38

The Scriptures teach in 2 Chronicles 7:14, *“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”* To turn from our wicked ways means to repent, to turn from the direction we are currently walking in and to go in the opposite direction - the right direction towards the Lord. The Israelites have a long history in the Old Testament of crying out to God, but not in an attitude of true repentance. The Word of God tells us that *“If we love the Lord we will obey Him”* (John 14:21) and *“To obey is better than sacrifice”* (1 Samuel 15:22). The Israelites did not walk in the ways of the Lord. They offered sacrifices to God and continued to sin. They tried to live under the covenant blessing of God, but were unwilling to live up to their end of the covenant. Their covenant was much like a marriage contract, and the history of the Israelites is littered with adultery in the form of idolatry. To receive God’s blessing, they were required to love and obey Him. As long as they sought the Lord faithfully and had a heart to truly honor and obey Him, He would be with them (2 Chronicles 15:2).

The Bible clearly contrasts how man looks at the outward appearance with how God sees our heart. We can convincingly act the part of a child of God. We can attend church and show up to serve, but if our heart is not in the right place God can clearly see our true motivation. *“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him”* (2 Chronicles 16:9). Our strength comes from Him, but to receive that power, we must be fully committed to Him. This is an individual response to Holy God, but it is required from the entire Body of Christ, the Church.

Currently, while there are many who profess a belief in God and the Truth of His Word, the landscape of our Nation portrays a vastly different portrait. The Bible is no longer a long-standing textbook in our schools; prayer is not allowed except in the face of tragedy, the cross cannot be displayed on public land; the Ten Commandments do not rule our courts, the Name of Jesus cannot be invoked except in profanity, and the government dictates what parts of God’s Word our pastors are allowed to teach. The original intent of family structure has been reduced, the institution of marriage has been redefined, the idea of faith has been reexamined, and our true freedom is in question.

Jesus said on the cross, *“Father forgive them for they know not what they do”* (Luke 23:34). Today, those who do not know the Truth of God’s Word will not be held

accountable for the state of God's world, but they will be held accountable for rejecting Christ. We as believers have been called to be "salt and light" in this world; however, the dimness of our lamp can hardly be seen above the darkness of our world and instead of preserving the truth of the power and promises of God's Word the name "Christian" evokes distaste in the mouths of unbelievers. We, as believers in God and receivers of His Eternal Salvation, are responsible for accomplishing the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20). Most of us, however, instead of standing in the gap and spreading the good news, have sat down, spread a blanket over our heads, and gone to sleep. *"A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man"* (Proverbs 6:10-11). The poverty of this land is not one of wealth, education, military - for those we are a nation strong. Our poverty is the lack of the Word of God. It is the gold mine upon which our nation was founded. It is the glue upon which the colonists stood unified. It is the foundation upon which government was built.

Somewhere along the pathway to enjoying the fruits of the labors of our founding fathers, we managed to forget that the pathway of the believer is one of toil. Instead of continuing to plant the seed of truth, we have picked the trees bare and reveled in our rest. Now, however, we are being awakened to realize that we no longer have the pleasure of enjoying our shady slumber. Our true rest does not come from that for which others have toiled; our rest comes from our Heavenly Father (Psalm 91:1). Our time on this earth is to accomplish a job we have been given, and, soon, we will enjoy our eternal rest.

The foundation does not need to be rebuilt. We are told to *"Raise up the age-old foundations."* The foundation is Jesus, and He is the Word. He can not be moved and He can not be shaken. He is our strong foundation upon which we should stand. 1 Samuel 2:8 reads, *"For the foundations of the earth are the Lord's; upon them He has set the world."* The question remains, what are we building upon this strong foundation? *"Because you rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant"* (Isaiah 30: 12-13). Much like today, the Israelites' domestic policy was based on oppression, and their foreign policy was based on deceit. There is no defense with this type of wall. It is based not upon truth, but upon lies, and it will crumble. Anything counterfeit that is being built on a foundation that is made of Truth will crumble. Truth and Light are revealing and eventually expose those that are false and weak.

"When the earth and all its people quake, It is I who hold its pillars firm." (Psalm 75:3) We have seen the moral fabric of our nation take a nose dive in recent years. A lot can be traced to the Supreme Court's decision in the 1947 case of Everson v. Board of Education which "erected a 'wall of separation between the Church and State.'" Here again is a wall being built - not based on truth, but trying to stand on the foundation of Truth upon which our nation was built. The weakness of this wall shows in the cracks and crevices of a nation that has fallen into a pit of moral and spiritual decline like no other time in history. The good news is that while the moral order of our world is falling apart and crumbling, we can rest in God who is holding us firm and keeping us stable.

Biblical history shows time and time again that when God's people Israel relied and trusted in the Lord they received rest and deliverance. *"Yet when you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand"* (2 Chronicles 16:8b). *"They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the Lord gave them rest on every side"* (Chronicles 15:15). *"And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side"* (2 Chronicles 20:30). Our own American history wonderfully exemplifies God's Divine hand

showering His favor and blessings on a people who honored Him, revered Him, and sought Him as *“our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”* (Psalm 46:1). The fact that our enemies have not overtaken us can only be reconciled through the recognition that God’s hand continues to rest on us in favor and not in judgment. But how long will He relent?

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm in the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and the end will come” (Matthew 24: 12-14). If we remain faithful and stand firm on the True Foundation, if we resist being hurt or paralyzed by the debris from the crumbling wall of deceit and oppression, then we can accomplish the mission that the Lord gave us. The Lord commanded Joshua and his army to keep marching, to remain faithful, and to trust in God - not in the size of the wall that loomed before them. When the wall finally crumbled - it did because the people obeyed God - they still had a job to do. They had to take what God had given them. The verse above states not only to stand firm, but also to preach the gospel. We move forward while keeping our eyes set on God, not on the giant that mocks and ridicules us, and we let God tear down the walls that stand in the way of us accomplishing His great plan.

The truth is, God has a plan and He will accomplish it with or without us. Mordecai counseled Esther and said, *“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your family will perish”* (Esther 4:14a). As believers, it is easy to rest in the fact that we will one day be taken from this place to our eternal reward, and, then, God will judge the land. Can we say that since we won’t be here, it doesn’t matter, we shouldn’t be concerned?” The Bible clearly states in Matthew 24:45, *“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”* Up until the moment He returns - and it could be at any moment - we are to be about our Father’s business...not just inside the church caring for the sheep, but outside the walls of the church, sharing the good news and all His good blessing and resources with the rest of the world.

“If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand firm at all” (Isaiah 7:9b). Our faith is in Jesus Christ. He is the solid rock on which we stand. Knowing that He is strong, reliable, trustworthy, and faithful should strengthen us to cast off other things in which we put our hope and trust - our relationships, our jobs, our bank accounts, our cars, our education, our children, our retirement funds - and turn to Him with full devotion and an undivided heart.

This is an individual response, but it requires a concerted effort. We must decidedly step forward and seize the day because time is most assuredly running out.

One Period – of Restoration!

“Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God. After I have strayed, I repented.” – Jeremiah 31:18b-19a

One Period: 2008 The Year of the Lord’s Favor
Three Feasts – Three Pilgrimages
February/March – Lenten Fast - the Passover & Feast of Unleavened Bread.
April/May – Pentecost Fast – The Feast of Weeks
September/October – Liberty Fast –
Trumpets/Day of Atonement/Feast of Tabernacles

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope, when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”
- Ephesians 4: 3-6*

One of the greatest disciplines recorded in the Old Testament and observed by the early church has been underutilized in recent years. Throughout the Scriptures, when there were times of great need or great decision, the people of God would set aside their daily routines and activities in order to humbly submit to God in prayer. For a period of time, they focused solely on seeking God’s face and favor. It wasn’t a magical formula to get God to do what they wanted; it was humble recognition that the circumstances were far out of human hands and would require God-size power and provision. Beyond that was the recognition that some of the circumstances in which they found themselves were a result of not keeping their focus on God and of not making Him their number one priority. One or a few would often recognize the need to submit to God on behalf of the entire community or nation.

Many have been laying the groundwork and have been faithfully praying and fasting for our nation’s spiritual revival, and, in these pockets of the faithful few, we have seen an awakening. The unholiness of God’s people has become disturbingly clear, and the irreverence of God’s Name by all people is startling evident. We are one people who worship one Lord, and we, the Church, are called His Body (Ephesians 12:12-27). If all members must work together to make the Body function properly, then all must join in this effort to ensure that the Name of the Lord is kept in its rightful place as Head of the Body of Christ.

“And He is the Head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18).
In the annals of history when one nation would conquer another they would cut off the head of the defeated king as a sign of their victory. Our King exists without the body, no one can remove Him from the throne. He was, He is, and He always will be. He created us, the Church, to be His body, His hands and feet, and to be the visible symbol of His presence in the world. While the Head can live without the body, the body is rendered useless without

the Head. Our hope rests in the Supreme power of Christ our King.
“And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be the Head over everything for the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way” (Eph. 1:22-23).

In his book, *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough*, Elmer Towns wrote, “The circle of fasting should be as large as the circle of concern.” The concern is for this great nation to return to the spiritual foundation upon which we were built – the foundation that is rooted in the Name of Jesus Christ and His Holy Scriptures. Therefore, the circle must encompass all believers in this nation: young, old, new, mature, in all denominations, and in all ministries, in big churches, and in small churches, all believers who claim the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord must unite and act.

In Colossians 2:19 we are told that we have lost connection with the Head, but in Ephesians 4: 15-16 we are taught how we can re-establish connection: *“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”* It is God’s ultimate purpose to bring all heaven and earth under the headship of Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

It is through us, His Church, that He will accomplish the plan of bringing the Good News to the four corners of the earth. In order to succeed, we must stop “doing” church and start living like the Church. To live like the Church means we must understand what it means to be the Body of Christ, and, to be the Body of Christ, we must understand under whose Head we exist. We must know our Lord fully, and to know Him requires reading, studying, and meditating on His Word. The Bible is His Story. It is Truth from beginning to end. It is the past, the present, and the future. We are a people who will spend eternity with our Lord and we can pursue nothing higher than seeking to know our Lord and Savior more deeply and intimately while we are on this earth, waiting to be called home to Him. This is not accomplished by indiscriminately picking up the Word of God when we have a problem, when we need a word of encouragement, or when we need to look up a Scripture to answer a Bible Study question. It requires full devotion and a heart-felt desire to want to know our Lord on a personal level. It requires a longing to get inside the Mind of Christ to and dig deep to understand how He plans and purposes all of life. This is a daily pursuit - a moment-by-moment, walking-beside-God, throughout-the-day pursuit, - where nothing has more importance than God and where nothing can be answered or decided without first consulting Him.

The Christian life is not one you choose. It is the Holy Spirit Who prompts you. Because the choice requires such perseverance, determination, and will far beyond human understanding, it must come from a place of higher power. When you accept the call to join this race you are given everything you need to train and prepare for the length of it. You receive an internal coach who alerts you to all that needs to be done and all that you are lacking, and you receive an instruction book that guides you every step of the way. Unfortunately for many believers, they have joined the race and forgotten to use their internal coach, and they have barely consulted their guidebook except for few basic directions. This race is long; it is difficult. It is full of trials and challenges, but it ends in victory and triumph. If we are in it for the long haul, we must prepare ourselves fully.

This 40 day period is one of refocusing. Call it a pit stop if you will. We need to check the oil, change a tire, and fix a few spark plugs. For some, it may mean a complete overhaul.

Whatever the case, the process that we'll take these 40 days will provide the systems check necessary to fine-tune our spiritual engine so we will hit the pavement with clearer vision, a more focused sense of direction, and the necessary fuel for greater endurance. This "pit stop" may seem to take up too much valuable time in our endlessly busy schedules, but it is important not to miss a single component. Every part of our lives must be touched, turned over, cleaned thoroughly, and placed back in proper order so that we are ready and capable to carry out the work that God prepared in advance for us to accomplish. Some may have worn-out parts that need refining; others may have parts that have never even been used. Still others may have parts hidden under the hood that they don't want anyone to see, and these need to be cleaned out completely. Regardless of what we have overused, underused, or kept secretly hidden, the Lord wants to dig deep, strip off the impurities, peel back the dirty layers, and give a fresh jolt of His power and presence to keep us on the road. We have a mission to fulfill and unless we allow Him to prepare us, we will surely be rear-ended, side-barred, or run head-first into a wall.

As believers, we need to remember that the path we are on is full of potholes and dangerous obstacles all designed to block our view and to veer us off the straight and narrow path so we can not complete the race before us. *"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Ephesians 6:12). Because this is a spiritual battle, our human weapons will not help us. We must be prepared spiritually, which means we must take a good look inside to see if we are adequately dressed.

In the Old Testament, whenever the army of God would go to battle, they knew they were fighting a spiritual battle. It was always the Holy One of Israel against all the other man-made gods of wood and clay. Because it was a spiritual battle, the people of God knew they depended fully on the power of the Lord God to give them victory. Their power did not flow from themselves. They had to completely trust that Holy God would go with them and show them favor. It was as important for them to prepare their spiritual armor as it was to prepare their physical armor. Before they could be powerfully clothed in the earthly realm, they had to be powerfully anointing from on High. The battle was - and is - always the Lord's, and He receives the glory, whether He shows Himself in judgment, discipline, or victory.

This period of preparation before battle is called "consecration". To be consecrated means to be set apart. Webster's Dictionary defines "consecrate" as "to set apart as holy; to devote to sacred or serious use." The word "sanctify" is defined in the same way and is used interchangeably in the Scripture. In Exodus 19:10 the Lord said to Moses, *"Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow."* And in Leviticus 11:45 He said, *"I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy."* This is God's high standard for us and is repeated in Matthew 5:48. Holiness is something we can not attain apart from Christ, and the perfection that comes with it will not happen here on this present earth. That should not stop us, though, from daily seeking to emulate our Lord. Our everyday life should reflect His holiness in all we do. The ground on which we walk is a battlefield, and to be adequately dressed for war means to be fully clothed in Christ on a continual basis.

The Hebrew for "sanctify" is "gadash", meaning to make ceremonially or morally clean; to purify. The Hebrew for "consecrate" is "yad", meaning an open hand; hand full; indicating power; direction. When we purify ourselves through praying and studying the Word of

God, our hands become full of power, and we receive Divine direction. In the Scriptures, when the hand is lifted up, it is a symbol of strength; when it is shriveled or dangling it is a symbol of weakness. When we are dedicated to prayer and to the Word of God, we receive power, courage, and direction for the tasks the Lord lays in front of us.

To consecrate themselves, the Israelites would ritually wash and cleanse their bodies and change their clothes. For us that means daily *“confessing our sins...and being cleansed from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9) and *“putting off our old nature and putting on the new one of Christ.”* We strip ourselves of the façade behind which we have been hiding, and, instead, we put on the pure and holy cloak of righteousness found in our new relationship with Christ. Many believers have accepted their new life in Christ but have failed to live outside those old, familiar layers. The sad result is a life hindered and robbed of its full potential in Christ.

The Scriptures tell us in 1st Timothy 4:4-5, *“For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer.”* We consecrate ourselves by devoting ourselves to the Word of God and to prayer – these two are inseparable (Acts 6:4). When we spend time in devotion to His Word, it penetrates our hearts and separates all that is holy from all that is unholy. Hebrews tells us, *“For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12). We must understand how to use this weapon and that requires spending many hours in thoughtful heartfelt practice and application. For any piece of armor to provide its intended protection, it is important that the user not only know how to put it on properly, but also understand how to care for it properly and how to use it in a time of defense. The Sword of the Spirit is a wonderful piece of armor; it is the only one that can be used both offensively and defensively (Ephesians 6:13-16). In this Spiritual battle where we want to cut down all strongholds and defeat the enemy, we must remember that the war is not of the flesh, and we do not want to use this Sword to cut down the spirit of those we are trying to bring over to our side. The Word of God is about light and life and we must understand how to use it to encourage, build up, and heal the wounds of those who have been injured in this battle. In order to know how to do this effectively we must spend time in prayer and quiet study of the Word. We must ask the Holy Spirit to give us deeper insight and understanding. As our minds are filled with the truth of His Word and we are drawn closer to His holiness, our hearts are changed and we desire to be more holy, to seek Him more fully, to turn from those things in our life that are not pure and righteous, and to have a greater love for others. We will desire that others may be drawn into His presence and that they may experience His awesome love.

So much of our lifetime is spent preparing for an earth-bound future. We achieve the education we need to get the best job; we save for a home for our family; we build up our retirement fund. But this earth is not our home, and, while we must be good stewards of God’s resources and thoughtfully plan our futures we must never lose sight of our future home with our Heavenly Father. We are ever closer to the time of the return of Christ, and we have to wonder if our Lord will be pleased by what He finds us doing when He returns. We must not waste another moment; this time is precious. Let us take this moment in history to truly get our hearts and minds set on things above (Colossians 3:1-4).

Why this particular moment in time?

“Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: ‘I am with you,’ declares the Lord. So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel...and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius” (Haggai 1:13-15). When it was time to rebuild the house of the Lord, He sent a messenger to stir up the people and encourage them to begin His work. God “moved their hearts” to do His will. In the same way there is a noticeable movement in the hearts of God’s people in this country – a Divine urging that the temple of the Lord must be rebuilt. His solid foundation built on the Name of Jesus Christ is being picked apart piece by piece, and He has had it up to the neck (Isaiah 8:8) with the wickedness that has prevailed in our land. He has placed it in the hearts of many to take a stand, and He is calling us to all to make a united front as the army of the Lord, to proclaim the Name of His renown in our present day.

The period of time that Haggai began to speak the Word of the Lord was September 21st. We too must begin a movement of encouraging all believers to wake up and prepare for the battle that is hard pressing on each side. We are now being attacked within the walls of our churches by unbelievers who do not know the truth of God’s Word, and we must stand upon His Word and be the Church that God has called us to be (the Book of Acts). Note that Zechariah joined Haggai to promote the work of the Lord within two months, so this was not an individual effort but required a team of people. In September, they first sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord and then began the work of providing funds for the building of the temple. The rebuilding program began in the months of April and May.

In John 2:19 Jesus said, *“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”* He meant His crucifixion and resurrection which is celebrated in March/April. The Lord told Moses to *“Consecrate the people and have them ready by the third day because on that day the Lord will come down”* (Exodus 19:10-11). Notice the comparison of these two Scriptures: in the Old Testament the Lord would “come down”, and in the New Testament the Lord would “rise up.” In Zechariah 3:9, the Lord Almighty said, *“I will remove the sin of the land in a single day.”* This day was Good Friday - the day that Jesus was crucified and sin was atoned for. This Scripture, while referencing the time when Jesus came down to die and be raised up, could also be referencing the time when He will “come down” again and return for the second coming.

With these Scriptures reminding us of the need to prepare for the Lord coming, and considering the fact that His first coming was for His crucifixion, it would seem fitting that we should observe a period of time to prepare for His return. We all should be watching, waiting, and working diligently with anticipation of that coming, but the truth is that most of us are working harder on our self-inflicted, fleshly, earthly pursuits.

There is a season of forty days prior to Resurrection Sunday that has been observed as a ritual period of fasting called Lent. While not observed by all denominations it seems a fitting time period to consecrate ourselves and return to Him with all our heart. He will return to us, that is without question. The question is, will we return to Him? This period of time will unite the entire Church to prepare to celebrate the reason we call ourselves “Christians”. After forty days of seeking the Lord through prayer, fasting, and the reading of the Word of God; after purifying our hearts, turning from our wicked ways, humbling ourselves (individually) before the Lord, and returning to our first Love, we will all unite to celebrate the Lord’s Supper and partake of the bread and the cup on Good Friday in our local church body. What could be a more fitting time period in which to reflect upon how

far we have fallen? Many of us have largely isolated ourselves from the world, yet we continue to conform to its expectations and temptations. After we strip our wicked ways, return to the Lord with all our heart, and fellowship in true unity with other believers, we can be restored to fulfill the great commission to which we have been called.

This period of Lent for the year 2008 falls in the month of February and March which is referenced in the book of Esther as the celebration of Purim. This was an important celebration for the Jews as they were celebrating the relief they received from the destruction of their enemies. They observed the celebration by giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor. The corresponding time frame seems fitting, since we too are seeking to be released from the oppression of our enemies - those who disrespect and disregard the Holy One of Israel.

In the Song of Songs, the beginning of spring is identified as a time of love: *“The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me”* (SS 2:13). What more appropriate time to return to our first love?

As we cry out to God for healing in this land, the greatest thing we can first accomplish is a healing in our hearts. Only then will true heart change will occur, and, with a greater love for our Lord, we will experience a renewed and greater love for our neighbors as well as a desire to see our enemies repent and receive the salvation of the Lord. We must stop “doing” church and start “being” the Church. We are the Body of Christ, and we must reflect Him in every way. Each individual member of the body must recognize how important they are for the whole Body to function properly, and each must step up to ensure they are holy and “set apart” for the purpose of bringing glory to the Name of Jesus Christ.

With this restoration of the Body of Christ we then can begin our rebuilding program and accomplish the great work of the Lord as outlined in Isaiah 1:17, *“Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.”*

One Nation Under God – Rebuilt!

“Therefore, this is what the Lord says; ‘I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt.’” - Zechariah 1:16

One Nation under God: A nation that is truly “under God” must measure up to His standards of justice and righteousness. These are the very pillars that hold up a society.

“The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of His unfailing love.” - Psalm 33:5

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance. From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth – he who forms the hearts of all who considers everything they do.” - Psalm 33:12-15

The Scriptures talk about the measuring line of God being justice and His plumb line being righteousness (Isaiah 28:17). These are the tools He uses to determine if we are measuring up to the standards according to which we, His people, have been built. In the book of Amos, the Israelites were shown to be out of plumb, and the Lord would no longer hear their prayers (Amos 7). The tools by which He built us are the same tools that can destroy us. God is in the building program, and He would rather us remain steadfast and true.

In Zechariah 1:16, the Lord talks about His house being rebuilt in Jerusalem and how He will stretch out His “measuring line”. The Hebrew word for this term is “middah” or extension; like a garment stretched out. The story of Ruth beautifully illustrates how Boaz stretched out his garment over her and rebuilt her family line by becoming her kinsman-redeemer, His grace also helped to build the family lineage of our Savior. In Isaiah 61, the text references the year of the Lord’s favor and how our true freedom, which we receive through salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, comes from the release from the bondage of sin. It is interesting to note that in this scripture, freedom corresponds to the Year of Jubilee, and we, as a nation have used Leviticus 25:10 “*Consecrate the fiftieth year and ‘proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants’*” on our Liberty Bell. Perhaps it is time to lift our voices together, proclaim the year of Jubilee, and ‘let freedom ring’.

It will require us, the Church, to break the bondage of our own sin before we can aid in breaking the bondage of sin and oppression in this land. Jeremiah 2:11 asks, “*Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols.*” This is so true of the nations around us. They hold tightly onto their worship systems, and they accuse our nation of rapid moral decline because of our religious freedoms. Our freedoms have afforded us much, and we have failed to recognize that our freedom to worship has made us lazy in our pursuit of God,

instead our desires have become focused on pursuing the things of this world. The prosperity of our freedoms was meant to bless and provide help for the other nations of the world.

If we are going to fast, pray, and seek God's face, we need to understand what a true fast is in the eyes of God. Isaiah 58: 6-7 explains the Lord's desires clearly, *"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe him and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"* The verses go on to say that when we do these things we will see healing and God will get the glory.

Micah 6:8 tells us that the Lord requires us *"To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* He desires mercy, not sacrifice (Hosea 6:6); He will not accept sacrifices offered without a pure heart to do His will. He desires our best, our first-fruits. As the song says, "They'll know we are Christians by our love." His Word in 1st Corinthians states that He will show us a more excellent way – the way of love. Anything less is a clanging, annoying bell that no one wants to hear. There can be little worse than being the recipients of the greatest love ever given (John 3:16) but accused of withholding that love from others. After the Lord stated the first and greatest command He followed it up by saying, *"And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'"* (Matthew 22:39).

It's been said that "actions speak louder than words" and "more is caught than taught". If we are going to be the Church, then we need to act like the Church, and this requires emulating the actions and attitudes of the Body of the One we represent. When Jesus was on this earth, His number one priority was to set aside quiet time to seek the Heavenly Father, but His great concern was for the people. He desired to be among them, to eat with them, to heal them, all while staying focused on the greatest legacy of His love...His sacrifice. In three years, He accomplished an eternity of work. The lives He touched, the bodies He healed, the minds He filled, and the purpose He fulfilled should stand as a testimony. It is what a life fully devoted to God's purposes should look like.

With the awakening of our hearts and the restoration of our minds and souls, we will be united with a greater sense of purpose and understanding that our mission is to fulfill the will of God and *"make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19). When we truly have a heart that is fully devoted to God, then we are filled with a love that extends to all people. Through the expression of this God-given love, our nation can be healed, one broken and lost person at a time.

Be advised when we emerge from our period of fasting, that the battle is just beginning when we come out of our time of fasting. Preparing for an attack is not only important before a victory but also – and especially – after a victory. We must be ever diligent to remain in Him and be faithful to the study of the Word and to prayer.

"He who has ears, let him hear." – Matthew 11:15

"Go to this people and say, 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become

*calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their
hearts and turn and I would heal them.”*
- Acts 28: 26-27

*“The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and
confidence forever.”*
- Isaiah 32:17

The Battle Plan

“The Lord says; ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; The wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.’”
-Isaiah 29:13-14

A recent online survey showed that the top two things which unify a nation are national tragedy and religious belief. In our country, it is a national tragedy that we have become the most Bible-illiterate generation in our nation’s history. It is a disgrace of epic proportions considering that our founding fathers fought for religious freedom and were determined that the teaching of the Word of God would be our primary textbook and law book in this new land. Since insisting that the Word of God has no place in the civic arena, the sad result is a rapid decline in our nation’s morality and spirituality. When righteousness rules a nation, the people rejoice. Our moral landscape stands as testimony that we have much to mourn. Our founding fathers probably never expected that, in only two centuries, we would be rewinding history and fighting for our religious freedom all over again.

*“Lift up a banner in the land!
Blow the trumpet among the nations!
Prepare the nations for battle.”*
-Jeremiah 5:27

Step 1:

Seek Godly Counsel: *“The king has charged me with a certain matter and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions’”* – 1st Samuel 21:2.

In 1st Samuel 21, David went to Nob and spoke to Ahimelech to seek the Lord’s guidance through the Urim and Thummin. This was the process the Israelites used to communicate with God, and it was entrusted to the High Priest. Today our High Priest is Jesus, and we need to seek counsel through Him first and foremost, then trusting those He brings across our path to confirm and guide the steps of the plan He has given.

“For waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisors.”
- Proverbs 24:6

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.”
- Proverbs 15:22

“For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure.”

- Proverbs 11:14

“Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance.”

- Proverbs 20:18

“I will restore your judges as in the days of old, you counselors as in the beginning.” –Isaiah 1:26

When the Lord gave Moses the plan for freeing the Israelites from their Egyptian oppression, the Lord told him to “Go, assemble the elders of Israel...and the elders of Israel will listen to you” (Exodus 3:16, 18).

“And when they (the elders) heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped” (Exodus 4:31).

With a plan this God-sized, we need a leadership team that is fully committed to God, and to the vision - willing to see it through to the glory of God. While God often identified a particular person in Scripture as righteous or His chosen instrument, He also surrounded them with a group of faithful warriors.

“The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone...select capable men from all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens” (Exodus 18:18, 21).

The elders were the leaders, judges and officials of the land. *“The Lord said to Moses; ‘Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people...they will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone’” (Numbers 11:16-17).*

In Ruth 4:2, Boaz met ten elders at the town gate to help make a decision on a legal matter. Ten elders were considered a full court in legal proceedings. In the Book of Proverbs, justice would be administered with wisdom at the gateways of the city (Proverbs 1).

When the temple was complete Solomon, *“summoned the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families to bring up the ark of the Lord’s covenant from Zion” (2 Chronicles 5:2).*

“When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2).

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two-by-two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go” (Luke 10:1).

Step 2:

Prepare the Army: *“We must obey God rather than men!” – Acts 5:29b*

A time of preparation precedes any battle. This period is of great importance to the whole plan of attack. From gathering the troops, to gaining their allegiance, to casting the vision, to sifting out those who are faint of heart, each step is crucial to the outcome of the battle plan.

A. Consecrate the Priests:

Those who will lead the troops must clearly know what the mission is. They must also have well-defined parameters for their particular role. The Israelites recognized their battles as spiritual ones and prepared by first seeking God. In that process, they consecrated themselves before the Lord, and the priests were always purified first before the rest of the army.

“They loved the praise from men more than the praise from God.” – John 12:43

“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful... Wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.” – 1 Corinthians 4:2, 5

“On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.” – 1 Thessalonians 2:4

For our modern day consecration the pastors and leaders will ask and encourage others to undergo a “circumcision of the heart” – God’s version of open-heart surgery. Before they can require that submission from those who God has entrusted them to shepherd, however, they must be willing to be first in line for the examination.

“Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” – 2 Samuel 7:7

“And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.” – Psalm 78:72

True pastor-shepherds are called by God to minister to and care for the flock. They are leaders and feeders. The apostles intimately knew the difficulty of church life, but they kept their priorities in order by giving their “*attention to prayer and the ministry of the word*” (Acts 6:4). The Old Testament reveals that it was the pagans who spent their time building and maintaining houses for their idols. God doesn’t dwell in structures; He dwells in the human heart, and that is where care and attention to ministry must be focused.

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything” (Acts 9:4,9).

In Numbers 16, Korah and a group of community leaders decided to challenge Moses’ authority, and, as a result, the wrath of God came upon them, and they were swallowed up by the earth. When God puts us in a position of authority or influence, we can be tempted to take advantage of that power and lord it over others or demand greater authority for ourselves. A call to ministry is a humble and holy call that requires a constant heart check for purity of motives.

In preparation for the pastors of our land to renew their call to ministry, they are being asked to humbly seek God through prayer, fasting, and His Word. Unlike Saul's experience, this will be a voluntary effort which relies on the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of God's plan for our nation as well as, individual roles in that plan.

B. Inform and Encourage the Church

As recorded in Ezra 5, the prophet Haggai delivered messages to the people of Judah, encouraging them to begin rebuilding the temple of God in Jerusalem. Because of increased opposition to accomplishing the work of the Lord, the people had become greatly discouraged and ceased all efforts to rebuild. They lost the desire to rebuild and instead focused on their own homes. It seems that the present Church is in need of encouragement to wake up and get back to work fulfilling the great commission. As we survey the moral and spiritual fabric of our nation and see how corrupt it has become, our recent laziness is glaringly evident. The blame rests on those of us who have fallen asleep and neglected the duties that the Lord left in our care.

How do you inspire a people to want to rebuild? The desire springs forth only when we understand how our life fits in with God's overall purposes. Haggai and Zechariah expressed to the people how important the temple was to their worship and sacrifice to God (Ezra 6:14-15). Only when the temple was rebuilt could the Name of God dwell there. We, too, must understand that to effect any change in the moral and spiritual climate of this nation, we must begin by rebuilding the temple of God which is our body, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We must offer ourselves up as living sacrifices for the Lord so that He can sift all that is unholy and strip us of those things that we hold in higher regard than Him.

In order to get to that place where we will allow Him to sift us we must be informed as to why He wants to use us. During this period of time the pastors will turn the church house into the school house. They will begin to educate the people on the Christian heritage of our nation and the role the Bible has played in the foundation of our country, and they will encourage a deeper look at the church that God intended us to be. This teaching, this leading and feeding, will inspire a sense of urgency for Christ's return as well as an urgency to return to His unfinished work. Teaching the full truth of God's Word and incorporating the use of great historical resources like those created and produced by Wallbuilders, Inc., will be necessary.

Step 3:

Issue the Call to March: *"Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly."* – Joel 1:14

A. Presidential Call To Fast and Pray:

"A vast army is coming against you from the other side of the Sea. Alarmed Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah."

– 2 Chronicles 20:2, 3

If the entire nation is in moral and spiritual decline, then it would seem fitting that the call to fast should be one of national importance. There were times in the Scripture when outsiders wanted to be included in a call to war or in a rebuilding effort, and the Israelites

had to discern their true motivation. As believers, our prayers are heard by the Father through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Non-believers cannot call out to God except in repentance. Therefore, this time of fasting and prayer is for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have accepted His gift of salvation by grace through faith.

The President of the United States is a professed believer in Jesus Christ, and it is only by the Divine hand of God that he has been placed in his position of power for such a time as this. We must pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to the President's heart and reveal to him the necessity of using his last year in office to stir up revival in the hearts of all those who call upon the One True God, the Holy One of Israel, God Almighty.

May God, who "sets up kings and deposes them" (Daniel 2:21) instruct the heart of this leader to have courage and conviction to stand firm against the evil influences that are invading this great country. May God convict him to issue a decree to all like-minded believers to seek the face of Holy God in humble prayer and petition through fasting on the Word of God. As a result, may see this nation return to its former glory as a beacon of light and a source of help to all peoples of all nations, and may the Name of God be exalted for the blessings we have received and bestowed upon our neighbors.

B. Consecrate the Church

At this time in history it is important to cast the net wide and to articulate the vision clearly so all believers may understand why they are a necessary part of this plan. Unity of the church will be critical at this stage. In order to fully represent the Body of Christ, every individual believer must be willing to step up and clean out the wicked and vile things that are corrupting this camp. When the holiness of Jesus is fully revealed, the people will naturally be separated, and those who are fully committed to the Lord will rise to the top. Out of that group will come our next generation of leaders who will stand firmly on the Word of God and be His representatives to a lost and dying world.

The greatest obstacle we face is our own heart. We have built a high and impenetrable wall around our hearts, and it must come down if we are to truly love God and obey Him. *"For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you"* (2 Chronicles 20:12). The Lord knows exactly what we need and in submitting our hearts to Him His power can be unleashed in this dark and dismal land.

When we commit to seek Him each day and for each meal we will see a decline in our physical strength, but as time goes on we will recognize a renewal of our spiritual strength. The more we dig into His Word and seek His truths for ourselves, as a regular diet, we will begin to recall Scripture and have an artillery of ammunition ready for any offensive or defensive strikes aimed at the enemy.

Tools needed: The Holy Bible & The Trumpet and Torch website online devotional journey experience – Learn to feast on the Word of God by registering online at www.trumpetandtorch.org and gain entrance to the Temple where you will Dine at the Table of the King. This meal-by-meal devotional journey will lead you through a daily consecration to renew your intimacy with the Lord. A second journey, WELLSRING, is also available in the

Temple for those who have already journeyed 40 days using the EAT devotional.

While not everyone will be able to take part in a radical fast of liquids only there are other options to eliminating unhealthy food and eating habits that would bar complete submission to God as our true Sustainer for this forty-day time frame. The main objective, though, is to substitute a meal of God's Word for each regular meal of the day and to get in a good habit of eating daily with the Lord. No more skipped meals or in-between-meal snacks that derail and ruin a healthy spiritual diet!

The desired outcome is that daily reading and meditating on the Word of God and talking to our Heavenly Father will become as natural to our lifestyle as eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It takes training and discipline to achieve a lifestyle that is fully devoted to Him, but once you have experienced this time of making Him your utmost priority, you will never want to return to your old lifestyle.

Of course, during this time the Lord will begin to sift those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. *"For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him"* (2 Chronicles 16:9). He will surely sift out those who are not fully devoted to Him or who have impure motives. The question is, will we be found faithful? *"For the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts"* (1 Chronicles 28:9b).

The Lord gave Gideon a dream to show him how the Midianites would be defeated. He assembled the Israelites and divided them into three groups: *"Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside"* (Judges 7:16).

"All the Israelites did just what the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, and on that day the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions" (Exodus 12:50-51).

When Jesus spoke to the people about the sower and the seed He described how the people would be divided when they heard the Word of God: *"The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop"* (Luke 8:11-15). The Word of God will be received individually. Recognizing the truth of God's Word will be a purely personal response. So, too, will be the willingness to obediently act on the revelations.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him' – but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit." - 1 Corinthians 2: 9-10

Why is it necessary to consecrate the people through the Word of God and prayer? 2 Kings 5:13 declares, *“If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed!’”*

The Israelites sealed the old covenant by the outward sign of circumcision. In preparation for battle, they consecrated themselves with an external physical cleansing. As beneficiaries of the new covenant, believers are sealed with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is our sign of that covenant. To consecrate ourselves we must have a circumcision of the heart. *“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code”* (Romans 2: 28-29).

“The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and will all your soul and live.”
- Deuteronomy 30:6

When Joshua obeyed God and had the people circumcised they were weak and vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy while they waited to be healed (Joshua 5:2-9). Their victory over their enemies came because of their obedience to God – this was their secret to success. Their example proves that when we are weak, we find our true Strength. When we go through a forty-day period of fasting to purify and consecrate ourselves to the Lord, we, too, will be weak and vulnerable to the enemy’s advances, but the Lord will give us the victory and we will come out stronger in the end.

“Go consecrate the people...you cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it.” - Joshua 5:1

Just like Joshua and the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho carrying the ark of the covenant of the Lord, we, too, will march. But instead of six days, we will march for six weeks. In full view of the unbeliever we will submit ourselves to the capable hand of God to be stripped of our selfish pursuits and evil desires and to become weak vessels so that He can rebuild us into stronger and more useful tools to accomplish His Divine purpose. On the seventh week, we will have been refreshed and healed, and the wall that we built around our heart - the one that separated Holy God from truly dwelling within us - will come down. The victory will truly be the Lord’s as He will have accomplished what He has long desired to do – to take captive the hearts of His dear children!

“In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner.”
-Isaiah 11:10

In the Old Testament a pole would be raised with a banner on it, signaling the troops to assemble or summoning the nations to return home (Isaiah 5:26). The cross was the greatest banner ever raised, and all the earth is drawn to Jesus (John 12:32).

We were established as a Christian nation; we must raise the Banner high and claim what was rightfully given to us for the glory of God. Edmund Burke said, *“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”* The Bible confirms his words with, *“Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins”* (James 3:17). Our God is a God who finishes the work He begins, and He will do so with

or without us. Let us not allow the enemies of God to claim that He can not finish what He starts. We must stand firm. Before we rush into battle, let us take the time necessary to prepare and consecrate ourselves before the Lord. This victory will be His and His alone!

“If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.” – Isaiah 7:9b

Step 4:

Reclaim the Land:

On the close of the Day of Atonement, a trumpet was blown to inaugurate the Year of Jubilee. Jubilee means “ram’s horn” and “trumpet”. This celebratory year was ushered in every fiftieth year. This Jubilee was a year consecrated to the Lord, and liberty was proclaimed to all the land (Leviticus 25:8-13). It was set apart as holy, and the people were to live off the land and were not to sow or reap. We are in need of a year of Jubilee in our country where we repent to God and seek His Divine forgiveness for what we have done to this land. It is only when the people of God turn from their wicked ways that we can truly experience the freedom we have in Christ. Let us have a reason to celebrate and give all those who will be watching a reason to take part of the Lord’s precious gift.

When we are grounded in the Word of God, our witness to the lost is its strongest. Because we have forsaken our first love and do not know Him as we should, we can not adequately represent Him to the world. The world has been watching, and we, as the Church of Jesus Christ, have done Him a grave injustice considering how we have represented our Lord and Savior to a lost and dying world. We are the visible representation of the Holy God – we are His very hands and feet, and we have allowed Him to be the subject of continual scorn and ridicule, and we have sat idly by as His very name is profaned.

Perhaps, in part, that fulfills Isaiah 53:2: *“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him”*, but His Name should be revered and esteemed above all others. We, as the church, should make Him irresistible to a watching world. But He must first become the priority of our lives, then and only then, when we have returned to Him with our whole heart in complete devotion and when we are living in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit will we accomplish all that He has planned for us. *“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see him naked, to cloth him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood”* (Isaiah 58:6-7).

Unbelievers desire to see the authenticity of our faith. Will we put into action what we say we believe? We must become the true church that God intended. *“Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow”* (Isaiah 1:17). Our responsibility extends beyond the walls of the church; it should flow into the streets, into the civic arena, and to the four corners of the earth. We have much ground to cover, and we have wasted enough time. Our Lord holds the clock of eternity in His Hands, and it’s just about time to sound the alarm for His return. Let Him return to call His Church home, and let Him find us faithful.

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”
- James 1:27

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