

Where are the Lamps

“If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand - shine!”

The intercessors are the lamps of God – so precious and so necessary. They are often alone, often isolated and ignored, their intercession unseen by any but the Lord. But they are vital to the future of God's people in Europe.

Part 1: The lamps

The boat

One day I was sitting in my office, thinking and reflecting on my work, when suddenly I saw, in the Spirit, a beautiful picture of the ocean. The sky was deep blue with huge clouds floating on the breeze. The sea was very calm, and white birds were flying high overhead. The overwhelming impression was one of peace and tranquility. As I looked, I saw sails, and then a boat came into view, gliding along in the lightest of breezes. The crew were on deck, sleeping and relaxing. I asked the Lord, "What am I seeing?" "This," he said, "is the Church in Yugoslavia. It is resting, relaxing, enjoying the view and the clean air." "O.K." I said, "so what's wrong with that?"

Suddenly my perspective changed. I was looking down from high over the ocean, and I saw that the boat was not in a calm sea, but was in the eye of a hurricane. Storms were tearing up the ocean all around it, and soon those same storms would hit the boat. But those in the boat were totally unaware of the danger heading their way. They were asleep.

This picture disturbed me greatly. I went to Belgrade, and was invited to a church, where I shared what I had seen. But there was no reaction among the people. They just sat there, and after I had finished, the Pastor stood up to give the announcements. Then one woman jumped up, and said, "This is the third time this year the Lord has sent us such a message. How many more times must he warn us?" Apparently none, because shortly after, Yugoslavia was torn apart by a civil war which caused untold suffering, and divided the country into small and struggling nations, filled with ethnic tensions which are still causing great suffering.

Are we in the same position in Europe? Is a spiritual hurricane of enormous proportions about to strike the continent, aiming squarely at destroying living testimony to Jesus Christ? Everywhere the shaking is beginning to make itself felt. Economic, ethnic and civil struggles are rising up all over Europe. A cataclysmic spiritual disaster is about to strike. Yet God's people in Europe seem to be doing exactly what Yugoslavian Christians were doing. The storm is coming, but the people, and especially the leaders, are asleep to the mortal danger which is threatening them.

Few will believe this challenge. Over and over again, I hear of the great moves of the Spirit in Europe. But this is a misunderstanding of the true position. What we see are tiny moves of the Spirit in specific churches or areas. But this shrinks God down to a size which fits the small things we are seeing. God sees things globally. He looks at Europe as an entity of many millions of people. He takes the spiritual temperature across the Continent, and at that level the Church fails miserably.

There are a few people who care to look and pray beyond the boundaries of their own churches. There are even less who want to care and pray nationally, and those who want to see things on a continent wide scale are a minute number – if there are indeed any at all. The enemy has sent God's people to sleep by letting them see small things, which then blind them to the wider spiritual issue – which is that we have become lazy, sleepy and blind to the storm which is coming.

The beacon

I have been thinking and praying about Europe for many years, but a very strange incident has pushed the issue of the lamps to the front of my mind.

Our bedroom has a fabulous view, right across the valley to the South Downs of Sussex. I woke, early one morning, and as it was already light, and I couldn't sleep, I got up to look at the view. There was an early morning light, the sun was just rising, and the Downs looked beautiful. Then I noticed, high up on the Downs, a very strong golden light. We do see this kind of thing sometimes, as the sun reflects off the windscreens of cars coming down into the valley. But I knew there was no road where I was looking. I was perplexed. I waited for the light to go away, but it continued to be very bright. I walked away from the window, to think.

After a few minutes, I went back to the window. The light was still there. I began to understand how Moses might have felt! I decided that I must be seeing the reflection of the sun on something, but the sun was just rising in the East - completely the wrong angle. I tried to explain it by a car (no road) a greenhouse (only sheep land there) and anything else I could think of. I knew it must be many miles away, yet it burnt so brightly, I felt I could reach down and touch it. I wanted to get in the car, and drive to the place. Twenty minutes had now passed, and I was puzzled. I turned round to wake my wife, so that she could come and look, but when I turned back, whatever it was had gone.

In my twenty five years in the prophetic ministry, I have seen many strange things, so it wasn't the sight which perplexed me, but rather what it meant. I talked it over with Jane, one of our team, and she said, "You have just seen the beacon of the Spirit burning." Had I? And if I had, what was I supposed to make of all this? The lamps vision and prophecy has to be understood against the background of the beacon. The Spirit is blazing out. It is time for the lamps to put their lights on the lamp stands again.

Europe and the lamps

The beacon and the boat came to me long before the word for Europe. But they made sense to me within that prophecy. I am quoting a section here, which is specifically about the lamps. (The quote is the bold text. The prophetic word is in italics.)

"These hearts, shining like lamps in dark places, are the ones who will prepare the way for my return.

But where are they?

I call for them, but I hear no reply.

I am searching but I cannot find them.

The sorrow in my heart is so great it almost crushes me."

The intercessors are the lamps of the Lord, shining in the darkest places, so that the nations can find their way back to him. I once had a vision for what was Yugoslavia.

I was in a very dark place, and I was carrying a lamp. I could hear movement around me, and when I lifted my lamp, I saw countless numbers of people, lost in the darkness. They had no idea of which way to go because they had no light. I lifted high the lamp in my hand, and said, “Follow this light.” Perhaps they did, perhaps they didn't - Yugoslavia is no more, and the sorrows of that area are beyond counting.

The intercessors are the lamps of God – so precious and so necessary. They are often alone, often isolated and ignored, their intercession unseen by any but the Lord. But they are vital to the future of God's people in Europe.

They are vital today, now, before the situation slips out of control, and the whole of the continent comes under judgment. These are the days for the intercessors of Europe to rise up and cry out. But where are they? Are there any there, and if there are, are there enough? And when are they going come together to the spiritual heart of Europe, to cry out day and night for the salvation of nearly 500 million people and 28 nations?

What are we to make of “*I am searching but I cannot find them?*” If these words are from the Lord, they are clear enough. He is searching for these precious lamps. He is actively involved in a process of trying to find them. He needs to light them up at this time of danger, and to equip them again with anointing and power, with courage and endurance, with passion and perseverance. The lamps need tending, but, apparently, he cannot find them.

But there are plenty of intercessors around - I meet them regularly so what is it he cannot find? He cannot find European intercessors - those who will see the wider picture, and be lamps not just for those around them, or even those in their own land, but for the whole continent. It's time for the European lamps to meet, to support each other, and to call the national and local lamps to a higher level of intercession than they have ever known before. And he can't find them. If he can't find these lamps, then his sorrow is great. What will the consequences be for us?

The messenger begins his task, seeking for the lamps, but he seems to cry in vain. Why is this? Is it because the people do not hear, or because the people are not there? Is it because many refuse the burden of intercession, feeling either that they are unworthy, or that others will come to the call? Or is it an unwillingness to be disturbed, to be shaken from comfortable affluence, comfortable and easy to digest truth? Whatever the reason, it seems that the messenger is calling largely in vain. The burden of this crushes his Spirit, as it did the spirit of Jesus.”

The search has started

I have started my own personal search for the lamps - for those men and women who have a burden and a passion for the heart of God, and for the will of God. These lamps are able to see what is happening in Europe, and are willing to lift that burden to the

Lord. I hope and pray that others are also looking for lamps, and perhaps small groups of lamps are gathered everywhere. But my search is for a different group. I am a prophet, and the lamps which come into my life will be formed around my prophetic understanding. Inevitably, we will be a prophetic lamp family – empowered and stimulated by the prophetic stream in which I stand, and which flows from me. I apologise if that looks a little arrogant, but it isn't meant to be. It's a statement of what will inevitably happen when a prophet gets involved in any group.

The lamps I find will not just be interceding, but there will be a strong prophetic challenge and influence in our intercession. I already belong to an intercessory family, and we have seen how the Lord is constantly injecting the prophetic into our prayer life. We cannot just reflect or contemplate, much as we would like to, because we are constantly being spoken to by the Lord, and this directs our intercession in a very clear and radical way. We are learning new ways of feeling the heart of God, and of interceding into that heart.

The lamps I am looking for are hidden - that's what the quote from the European word suggests. There may be a number of reasons for this, but in essence, those who want to intercede at the deep level have been rejected or silenced by God's people. My experience of God's people, over 40 years of ministry and in over 50 countries, is that, generally, the Church does not want to hear too much from God. Little things are O.K., but anything on a national or global scale is not welcome. It is too challenging, and faith, especially in the West, has grown cold, organised, boxed in, controlled and comfortable. The Church, as a body, does not take kindly to any message which wants to turn everything on its head, demands huge change and massive personal sacrifice. There are some individuals who are willing to yield to such challenges, but very few, and as a body, the Church generally says “No thanks.” Perhaps I have been unfortunate in the churches I have visited, but if we study the word for Hammerfest, in the extended global prophecy “VisionWorld 27, God's final word?” we will see there what I believe is the general situation in the West.

Back on the stands

Sacrifice, service, endurance and suffering are out of fashion. Prosperity, comfort and personal satisfaction are the buzz words. Against this background, lamps have found their ministries curtailed or rejected, and they have gone into spiritual hiding. They have taken their lamps from the lamp stands, and put them under buckets, where at least the light can be safe, and not put out. Now the Lord is calling for the lamps to put their lights back on their lamp stands, but how can this be done? The church hasn't changed, so won't things be the same? I don't think so, because although the church hasn't changed, the situation has changed. Europe, and that includes the U.K. is facing a time of turmoil and shaking which it hasn't experienced for centuries. The world situation is changing, and there is a spirit of uncertainty, verging on the beginnings of a spirit of fear, around us.

Those who sounded the trumpet 20 years ago were just ignored - I know, I was one of them. Now, people are beginning to ask the very questions which some have been posing for decades - what is happening to us, and where will it all end? Some in the church are

asking, but as usual, the non believing world seems to be more aware of what is going on than God's people. As is so often the case we, who were to be the watchmen, in the forefront of God's spirit, warning and guiding the creation into safety, have found ourselves speaking from the rear. We are calling out to a world which has, in its thinking and needs, moved way ahead of us.

Failed watchmen - that's a good description of the Church, and what a condemning one. Why have we failed to warn? There are many reasons, but one of them is that we have forced our lamps to put their lights under their buckets, instead of trying to learn from their light what is happening and why. Perhaps at last, a call from the lamps will be listened to - it's not yet too late. Perhaps at last a sluggish and lazy church will wake up to the situation, and again assume the position of watchmen. Whatever the case, it's worth one last try.

The lamps must come together, find their courage, and put their lamps back on the lamp stands. This challenge comes clearly from the word for Europe. The lamps have to gather, to encourage and lift up each other, and to encourage the lamps in individual nations, cities, towns, and villages to also burn more brightly. When the lamps are dim at the international level, they are dim all down the line. The lamps have to gather - lamps from all over Europe. This is an almost impossible task. As they are hidden, who can find them, and when they are found, who can gather them? My only answer here is to begin wherever and however we can. Lamps know lamps, and lamps reading this material will find their spirits warming to it. God can act on that desire. It is the responsibility of the lamps to begin to pray for a collective gathering. The lamps are the hope of Europe – the only hope of Europe.

What is a lamp like?

But what kind of person is a lamp? This is a difficult question to answer, because they are so hidden, that they are hard to study! But these are some of the characteristics I am looking for:-

Those who have been toughened by experience

About twenty five years ago, one of my children died just after he was born. This was a tough experience, and many reading this will have had equally challenging life experiences. But it toughened my spiritual life. As the years went by, through this tragedy, I discovered that I was able to enter into ever deeper parts of the heart of God. The lamps will have been similarly toughened by life's experiences. This is so necessary. The pressures on us, and the pressure of the enemy against us is so phenomenal, that we have to be tough warriors. This means, inevitably, that lamps will not be young Christians. Being a young Christian is a joy, but it doesn't equip a person to face the bitter enmity and wrath of the enemy. We cannot put green troops in the path of such an enemy. To put some biblical foundations behind what I have said, let's reflect on Hannah's path to intercession.

It was born out of bitter experience

Like most intercessors, her call comes in a painful way. The beginning of Hannah's path to intercession is seen in one simple phrase – "Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none." From this agony, with all its attached criticism and goading from Peninnah, and undoubtedly other women, Hannah began to perceive the need to pray in a different way. Most called to intercession soon experience some deep emotional disturbance as part of the call. It is very biblical. Jesus knew very deep emotional distress.

Matthew 9:36

Jesus has compassion on the crowds.

Mark 3:5

Jesus feels anger at the attitudes of his enemies.

John 11:35

Jesus weeps at the death of his friend.

We should read Matthew 26:36-46, especially this verse:- "My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death." This must be one of the deepest emotional disturbances found in the Bible. Jesus feels the whole weight of sin, the awfulness of the way ahead, the loneliness, and the pain and sorrow which he, and after him his friends will experience. It is to this depth of emotion that all intercessors must finally come. Then we can truly cry out to the Lord in prayer, as Hannah did. How long did she cry and intercede? How long did she pray? We assume that it was not such a long period, and we should take note of this. Interceding at a deep level is very exhausting for our human spirit. We cannot endure it for very long at one time.

Paid the price of intercession

Intercession has a price to it. This is a very hard lesson for all those called into this ministry. What was Hannah's price? **"Oh Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant, but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life.."** (v.11) She was interceding, knowing the price which she will have to pay if her request is granted. When Jesus said, "The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many people," he was doing the same thing. (Mark 10:35) He knew the price he would have to pay if God was going to fulfill his salvation purposes through him.

Lamps know the price they will have to pay, and despite the price, they go on crying out to God. Only the Holy Spirit can call a man or woman to this painful position, and only the Holy Spirit can give a man or a woman the courage to pray in such a way. Yet without this kind of intercessory commitment from Hannah, there would have been no Samuel, and without Samuel, the plan of salvation could have been lost. If the intercessors of a Nation or Continent are unwilling to come forward and bear the burden, then the Nation and Continent is truly desperate, and has little hope of salvation. If this looks like a serious statement, then it is to remind us that intercession is a serious business.

Brought the fruit of its exercise

Hannah's entry to the role of intercessor was blessed by God. **“So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying ‘because I asked the Lord for him.’”** (v.20) **“And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters.”** (Ch 2:21)

Intercession achieves that for which it intercedes. God answers prayer. But Hannah was only at the beginning of her road. She interceded and received the fruits of her prayer quickly. As we mature, so the answers take a little longer. We have to fight harder in the heavenly places, to break through the enemy, and move the heart of God. Look at Simeon. God promised him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (Luke 2:26) He had waited a long time for this promise to be fulfilled. Anna also had been praying and interceding for many years. (Luke 2:36-38)

Those who pray with their hearts

Lamps do not pray – they feel. This is the secret of the lamps – they have learnt to feel and within that emotional framework to lift needs to God. Again, let's get some scriptural support for this teaching.

First, they feel the pain of God

In Hosea 11, God outlines all his frustrations with his people. They don't love him, they don't care about him, they don't listen to him, they go after other gods, and so on. It's a long list of disobedience. But then, bursting from his heart, comes this cry:- **“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?”** This is a painful cry, from the tender and broken heart of God. Those who enter into intercession, have to be able to see, feel and share this pain. I remember one occasion when I was in the presence of God, and he showed me the pain in his heart for his broken creation. I was so shocked. Then God began to let me feel more and more of this pain. In the end I cried out **“Stop! I can't bear anymore.”** God said to me **“What kind of a friend are you then, who limits your willingness to share my pain?”** I never forgot those words. If we want to intercede, then we have to be willing to see things as he sees them, and share the pain which he has to bear daily for his creation.

Second, they feel the pain of men

When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because **“they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”** (Matthew 9: 36) He felt their lostness, their uncertainties, their sorrows and their hopelessness. He felt the pain in the heart of men. Those who enter intercession have to be willing to share the pain in the heart of men. One day, a woman came to me, and began to pour out her pain, because she had been raped. It was so painful to see and hear, but I refused to turn my emotions away. I let the devastation and the shame touch my heart. It hurt me so much, but how else could I

intercede for her? The pain of men and women is endless, deep and bewildering. But we have to bear it, so that we can intercede. This is easy to write, but very painful to do. But there is no other way.

Third, they bring the two together in the heavenly places

Why must we feel these pains – the pain of God and the pain of men? So that we can bring the two together in the heavenly places. That is our job. This is the heart and burden of intercession - to be in the heavenly places, with the pain of God and the pain of men in our heart. Then we are fully equipped to begin to cry out before God. In Gethsemane, Jesus demonstrates to us exactly this principle:-

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow, to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” (Matthew 26:38) Here, Jesus is feeling the pain of men, and the ruin of sin in the lives of God’s creatures.

“Going a little further, he fell with his face to the ground, and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’” (Matthew 26:39) Here, Jesus is struggling with the heart of God, which needed the Son to be obedient. It’s not hard to imagine how painful this was for God, and for Jesus. This agonising position is the place of intercession. No wonder few accept the burden.

Lamps do not give up

There has to be that quality within the lamps which says, as did Habakkuk:

“Though the fig tree does not bud, and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my saviour.” (Hab 2: 17-18)

We have to do what Jesus commands:-

“Stay here and keep watch.” (Mark 14: 34)

We have to do what the Apostle commands:-

“Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (2 Tim.2:3)

Know our weapons

All God's people must know and use the spiritual armour of Ephesians 6, but such armour is inadequate for the lamps. We are in the forefront of a red hot battle - a fight to the death for the soul of Europe. We need something stronger, and there is something stronger – sacrifice. In our churches today, we are not hearing much preaching about sacrifice, yet it

remains a key element in our theology. Jesus is described by John as “the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) His blood is referred to often in the New Testament:-

By Jesus:- “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them.” “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.” (Mark 14:23-25)

This is repeated by Apostle Paul:- “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.” (1 Cor 11:23-25)

By the writer of Hebrews:- “The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:13-14)

By Peter:- “ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

By John:- “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

By Revelation:- “And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” (Rev 5:9)

Sacrifice is a key element in our understanding. The sacrificial lamb of God broke every stronghold, and every power. His blood is the symbol of our victory over all the forces of darkness. The sacrifice is total and adequate for all time. We must learn to draw on its power as we battle for our nations. Our problem is that we have forgotten the power of sacrifice. If we lived in the developing world, we would not make such a mistake. In Africa for example, sacrifices are still offered by the Fetish priests, and many occult practices are linked to sacrifice. In the Far East, it is not uncommon to find sacrifices burning on street altars. In South America, once people venture out beyond the cities, it is easy to find sacrificial acts being performed in forests and on hillsides. In this kind of environment, the Christians need a sacrifice which can speak into this culture. The sacrifice of Jesus speaks loudly to such people.

The sacrifice speaks as loudly to us as well. It is able to break every curse and every stronghold of the enemy. We seem to have forgotten how to use it. The Christians that

went before us knew how to plead the blood of the sacrifice, and as they did the enemy grew weak. We need to get back to using the power of the lamb of God, and his shed blood, to release ourselves from the prison of secularism, and bring about the release of the Spirit for which we long.

Lamps must have no barriers to their vision of intercession

Once I had this vision. I was standing in a vast plain. In whichever direction I looked, there was nothing but this plain stretching away to the horizon. There were no buildings, no villages, no roads - just a vast emptiness, which seemed to go on forever. I was a little frightened by what I was seeing. I felt alone, and small. Then the Lord spoke to me, "As far as you can see, that's how big I am, and if you went to the very edge of the plain, there is still more of me." I don't think I had ever appreciated the meaning of the word "Almighty" before this experience. Then he went on "The only limits to me are the ones you place on me. The only limits to your faith, and what you can achieve in my service are the limits you place on your own faith."

The lamps I am seeking must have this attitude. We must believe not only in the "Almighty", but also believe that he can turn any situation round. If I have to explain this to the lamps, then they are not the ones I am looking for. Lamps already know that God can save Europe, and can bring a flood of blessing to the Continent. I think both Anna and Simeon would have made good lamps. Anna waited a long time for God to move, and Simeon was at the end of his life until his promise was fulfilled. Lamps know that God can change things - anything.

I've just got back from Berlin. I wanted to visit the Pergamum museum, and lift praises to the Lord in front of Satan's throne, which is in that building. But when I got there, I found that they had a large exhibition, called "Babylon - myth and truth." It struck me that the enemy was afraid, and had gathered Babylon to his protection. So I just bought some bread and wine, read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, broke and shared the bread and wine with my wife. It looked very insignificant. Long queues were waiting to meet Babylon, and no one paid any attention to us - in the earthly places. But in the heavenly places it was a very different story.

Lamps will understand exactly what was going on. They needed to be with me, interceding, while I ministered. God is calling the lamps to gather with the prophets to fight for the soul of Europe.

It's time.

Part 2: The lamps commission

I saw a man, standing by a large pile of rocks. He had a hammer and a chisel, and he was trying to break the rocks. It was a very slow job.

People watched him, and they were laughing, because his task seemed so impossible.

But he turned to them, and said, “I am going to carry on. There is water beneath these rocks.”

“I saw a thick layer of soil everywhere. Suddenly, the wind of the Spirit began to blow, and as the soil was blown away, I saw lamps everywhere. They were not burning, but their wicks were dry, ready to be lit up again.

At the time of writing, we have a number of lamps in the UK, and are beginning to explore Europe for them. But what is it that they are supposed to do? The answer to this question is to be found in understanding part of the European prophecy. This prophecy is included in full at the end of this material, but here is the relevant passage:-

“Light the fires of repentance, that will burn away the dross, the weakness, the laziness, the sleep of my people. Then my people will be able to turn back from the way of desolation into which so many have strayed.”

Let's take a closer look at this word.

“Light the fires of repentance.”

Psalm 51 is the classic place to look for details of personal repentance, but we also need to look at texts which encompass national repentance. Verses I have found helpful for national repentance are:

“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 I will hear them from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

“I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you.” (Nehemiah.1:6)

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” (Matt 26:38)

The Chronicler and Nehemiah both understood that they could take on themselves confession of sin for the whole Nation. Jesus took on himself the burden of sin for the whole world. This act by Jesus was a confession of identification. Jesus knew no sin, (1 Peter 2:22) but he could, and did, stand in the place of sinners, to bring all to the Father for forgiveness. We are going to have to reclaim this position - the need to identify with the world, and to confess for and on behalf of the world, so that repentance at a national level can begin. The task appears almost impossible. It has always appeared so, yet there must be a way through.

Joel's way ahead

Joel gives us some clear ideas, and his book is worth a full study. But to focus on one or two of the challenges:-

“Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill.” (2:1) “Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” (2:12) “Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.”(2:15)

As we study Nehemiah, Chronicles, and Joel, a pattern begins to emerge, of identification, acceptance of sin, of assembly, fasting, and repentance. God will answer us when we follow this pattern. But we must accept the dangerous position that such a response will put us in:-

- * Humbling is hard and unpopular.
- * The enemy hates repentance, and will attack all who try it. Look at the threats to Nehemiah, and the attacks on Jesus.
- * The pain of it is great. It almost crushed Jesus in Gethsemane. (Matt 26:38)

All this will be ours if we are to come to his throne in repentance for the nations. No one said it would be easy, and those called to be lamps already know the price they will have to pay. I have to tell the lamps that the price is higher than they think.

“Burn away”

Fire is a symbol of the purification of God's people. Elijah experienced it, (1 Kings 18:38) and so did the New Testament Church. When God moved in power in Ephesus:-

“Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burnt them publically” (Acts 19:18-19) “In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” (v20)

We are praying for something exceedingly powerful - a fire once lit which will purge, cleanse, purify, and leave the ground burnt but ready for new growth. Are we prepared to let this happen to us? If not, how can we expect it to light up in Europe? This is not an “us” and “them” situation.” It has to begin in us. How can we explain this kind of power release?

- * It is no less than the power of creation being released to recreate, and redeem us. (Gen 1:1-2: John 1:1-5)
- * It is the power of the cross. (Romans 1:16)
- * It is the power which raised Jesus from the dead.(Romans 8:11)

Let's be aware of what we are asking for. This is no small miracle.

Dross, weakness, laziness, sleep

Now having understood what we want, what we are asking for, and what repentance is, let's look at what we are up against, and it's not an encouraging sight.

“Dross”

This is the leftover product from smelting a metal - the impurity which comes to the surface, and is scraped off and thrown away. It is impure, useless and must be removed.

We are always going to be impure. It is a lifetime process to change us into the pure gold which Jesus intended for us, and for which he sacrificed his life. So we are not talking about the process of daily forgiveness. So what are we talking about? What impurities have entered into us, that have so spoiled us that they are in danger of dragging the whole church into judgment?

We have lost our **prophetic position**. The church was meant to be, among many other things, a prophet to the Nations. What Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel did in the Old covenant, God's body was meant to do in the New covenant. We were meant to be a servant prophet, a challenging prophet, a prophet living out the promises of God, so that the Nations could see the real radical alternative to greed and failure. But we lost this pure gold, exchanging it for the dross of prosperity, and peace at any price.

We have lost our **intercessory spirit** – or the value of it. I've already written about this, but what a tragedy. Intercessors have been driven underground, been forced to take their lamps from their stands and put them under buckets, or have even given up their calling because the church has been so disinterested. Intercession is pure gold. The church has rejected it, preferring dross.

We have surrendered our **uniqueness**, to multifaith teaching. We live in a multi cultural world, and part of our Christian conviction is that everyone has the right to choose who they will worship. But in the end, the Bible says “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3) and “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” (Phil 2:10) In the end, we are an inclusive and an exclusive faith. We want and long to include all people. But we exclude those who do not confess Jesus as Lord. Yet the interfaith dialogue has led us into serious compromise, and robbed us of our uniqueness.

We have abandoned our **watchtower** position. Ezekiel made it clear that we were to be watchmen, and the consequences for failing in this role, for us and for the Nations: “When I say to the wicked 'O wicked man you will surely die' and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin and I will hold you accountable for his blood.” (Ezekiel 33:8) Some may point us to the next verse, but I fear that verse 8 is where we are.

We have lost our **global/continent-wide vision**. Other Faiths have a clear world vision, but we seem to have replaced “Go to all the Nations” with a “my church” mentality. This has certainly been my experience, as I have tried for 25 years to help churches, towns, cities and nations wake up to their global responsibilities and opportunities. It's strange that the more global our trade has become, and the more the internet has linked us up, the more insular we have become as God's people. This must be one of the crowning achievements of the enemy.

The **sacrificial spirit and the servant heart** are at a low ebb. Sacrifice has been one of the key experiences of Christianity, bringing us through the many storms which have struck us over two millennia. Yet today, talk of servant ministry, and of sacrificial surrender, fall on dull ears. This must be one of the Lord's greatest heartaches. He set the

standard:- “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34) and “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many people.” (Mark 10:45) We have stripped these challenges of their power.

We may be tempted to think these things, serious though they are, don't really matter. But the dross spoils the gold, lowering its purity and its value. This has a terrible consequence. It lowers the value of the offering of praise and worship which we can bring to the Lord. We have become, or are in danger of becoming, Laodicea:- “You say 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing'. But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, naked and blind.” (Rev 3:17-18)

“Weakness”

What a wide ranging word! We are full of weakness - in fact the Bible tells us that we have the glory in jars of clay, so that the glory can be given to God for anything we achieve. (2 Cor 4:7) But there is a different weakness being highlighted here - a weakness not of action but of character.

Saul, who would do things his way. (1 Sam 13:1-15)

Demas, in love with the world. (2 Tim 4:10)

Disobedience. (Jer 6:16)

Commitment. (John 6:16)

The church in Europe has grown weak in its character. The passionate fire has been replaced by a flickering candle. We have turned away from our great commission to being content with small things. The darkness has grown great, but we have failed to challenge and break the enemy, even at the cost of our lives. This weakness must be exposed, challenged and turned back. We have to find the first love passion of Ephesus, (Rev 2:4), and the willingness to confront a darkness which cannot overcome us (John 1:5), once it knows who is in us and what we are prepared to do and sacrifice. An unwillingness to sacrifice has crept up on us. A comfortable compromising spirit has inhabited us. We are weak. But we can become strong again, if we cry out to him, confessing our backsliding, Look how strong Israel was after Mizpah. (1 Sam 7:10-11)

“Laziness”

Laziness doesn't look that serious on the surface. We see it as more of an annoyance than a problem. People are lazy at home - especially our children! Things which should be done don't get done, not out of anger or a deliberate attempt to annoy, but just because “I didn't get round to it,” or “I'll do it tomorrow.” Our Western culture has grown fat and lazy. Putting things off, not bothering, not seeing the importance - all are endemic. But why make a big issue of it? Everything gets done in the end, and if it doesn't, well, the world won't come to an end. There are a number of serious errors in this thinking:-

Laziness weakens us.

We need to be ready, and alert for action (Mark 14:32-38). If we are lazy, then the call to fight won't seem so urgent, nor will the response be so instant. Failing to respond to the Lord's call can be fatal, as Sodom and Gomorrah discovered. (Genesis 19)

The enemy isn't lazy.

Ephesians 6 warns us that our enemy, far from being lazy, is well organised and ready. He has method, he has resources, and a plan. (Ephesians 6:10-12: Revelation 13). He sows weeds in the wheat, (Matt 13:24-30) and works to deceive and destroy (John 10:10).

The Lord's name is damaged.

The Lord pointed out Job's faithfulness to Satan (Job 2:3). What will happen when he points us out to Satan? Will he discover a people who don't take his name or his call seriously? Not only is this an insult, it is a sure way to bring God's judgment on us. He has to act to protect his name - and he will.

The lamps have got to be the complete opposite to lazy - alert, ready, and willing to sacrifice. But it's not easy to be like this when the rest are lazy. This is one of the reasons why the lamps have grown dim in the European church. Effectively, the church has driven them out, pushed them down, or tried to destroy their absolute commitment to God. The majority will always try to do this, because bright lamps show them up. Prophets have the same problem. But it is time for the lamps to come back onto their stands, and to show up the lazy church we have become. There will be a high price for this and it has to be paid.

“Sleep”

If we are a sleeping church what are we asleep to?

The works of the enemy. (1 Peter 5:8)

The warning of the prophets. (1 Kings 22:17)

The call of the Lord to “watch and pray.” (Matt 26:40-41)

Many churches and many Christians will disagree with the opinion that the church is sleeping. They point to the works of God in their churches, and even to wider moves of the Spirit. My reply is always the same. “If you are right, then Europe should be a mass of fire-filled Christians, changing the very fabric of the nations, bringing the whole land under the power of the Spirit, and storming ahead with a Spirit filled charge to change the world. Show me that, and I will rejoice.”

But the truth is quite the opposite. The Nations are spinning out of control into the hands of the enemy, and the people either don't realise it, or don't care. Our advice is no longer sought or wanted on the wider scale. The nations are ploughing their own furrows,

leaving us to wither on the vine. On a Muslim website I read this: “ The Muslim faith is young, positive and thrusting. The West is old, tired and increasingly irrelevant.” I fear that they may be right.

The way of desolation

This is an expression which needs careful thought. “Desolation” contains so many emotions, among them emptiness, hopelessness, despair and fear. Ultimately it is the way which leads to the destruction of the human spirit, which is exactly what Satan wants, and outlines clearly in Revelation 13.

No one in their right mind would ever enter such a place, but it appears that the consequence of weakness, laziness and sleep has caused us to drift into this pathway. Here I encounter a big problem - God's people are unable, or unwilling, to see the peril of where they are. We won't accept the spiritual diagnosis, although all the symptoms are pointing in one direction. We don't like the diagnosis, so we reject any who suggest the root of our sickness.

This is the terrible danger of the path of desolation - we don't realise we are on it until it is too late. Desolation is, I believe, the very root of what we are facing in Europe. Times of hope, of revival, of a powerful moving of God are beyond us now. We are fixed in the way of desolation, and nothing on this earth can save us. The situation is hopeless. Revelation 13, Babylon, (Gen 11:1-9): the gold statue (Daniel 3); the bondage of Egypt (Exodus 1) - all have overtaken us.

We are desolate. Once we can take this into our spirit, there is hope. Jesus also walked the path of desolation, and he walked it to a point which we have not reached, and thanks to his sacrifice, will never have to reach. (Mark 14 – 15) The ultimate desolation was broken by his death

The work of the lamps

Against the background of everything written here, what are the lamps supposed to do? I hesitate to answer this question in too much detail, because if anyone feels called to be a lamp, then the Lord will make clear the task. However, there are a few things which it might be useful to consider.

- * **The lamps are shining to show us the danger we are in. (Phil 2: 14-17)**
- * **The lamps will be expected to bear the burden of our sinfulness and failure, and plead with God about it. (2 Chron 7:14)**
- * **The lamps must wake us up to our desolation.**
- * **The lamps, in their shining, show us that, even in the face of disaster there is hope. (Ezek 37: Rev 20-21)**

Linking up

The lamps can, and must shine wherever they are. But they also need to link up with other lamps, for mutual encouragement and for the strengthening of the intercessory thrust. This is a very large task, and needs serious commitment and leadership to make it happen. But I am beginning to find and link up lamps in a small way, both in the U.K. and Europe.

I am willing to talk to anyone about this, and link them into the small network I am being allowed, by the grace of God, to build. Do feel free to get in touch, and together we can see if there is a place in the network for us all. Our primary language is English, but we have access to French, German and Italian, so don't let language be a barrier.

It's a big risk - for me and for anyone who gets in touch. We probably won't know each other, so how can we build trust, and know that this is the right path for us? I will probably need to check out anyone who contacts me, especially with their own Pastor, Minister or leader. Those who contact me will probably want to check me out with responsible people who have worked with me for years. This is a necessary process for all of us. But the risk of not linking up are far greater – the possible loss of Europe?

I can be contacted at the following e mail addresses. I have also included my mobile number, as this is the one most unlikely to change over the years.

visionworld27@yahoo.co.uk
jimsmithghana@yahoo.co.uk

The websites will give an up to date address to write to, but currently (2009) my office address is **Suite 3, Heffle Buildings, 33a High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8HU** United Kingdom. Our websites will always contain our latest postal address.

VisionWorld27.org
serving-africa.org

My mobile 07803 617435
From outside the U.K., dial 00 44 7803 617435

Part 3: Is there any hope for Europe?

“My hope is that Christians and Churches will wake up to what is happening, and will become a people on fire for the Lord, filled with the blessings he has in store for the Overcommers, and so be ready to receive Him.”

The lamps ministry has its root in the European prophecy, which I include here. I have removed material which I have already covered in previous sections, but left the word, its biblical base, and some of my reflections.

First word

Light the fires in the hearts of my people, fires to light my way. Light the fire of repentance, that will burn away the dross, the weakness, the laziness, the sleep of my people. Then my people will be able to turn back from the way of desolation into which so many have strayed.

Light the fires of fervent expectation and longing for my return, absent from the lives of so many of my people.

Light the fire of urgent evangelism, the desire to gather the harvest while there is still time, before the summer passes and all is lost.

Light the fire of praise that a joyful sound may be rising to the Father's throne, a sound of rejoicing as the bridegroom prepares to come for the bride.

Word

Light the fires in the hearts of my people, fires to light my way.

Bible background

2 Chronicles 7:1 "When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple."

Luke 24: 30-32 "When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Reflection

If God is looking to reignite the fire in us, then where has our old fire gone?

* **We have become comfortable.** We have all the outward trappings of faith, but none of the inner fire. Comfort has smothered us.

* **We have become lazy.** When things are going well, when the church is feeding us all we want, when the message is one of prosperity, health and wealth, who wants to make

any effort? The prosperity gospel has a lot to answer for, but it's not going to find it quite so easy to prosper in the face of oil and food shortages, and economic and political uncertainty. I'm not against the prosperity gospel as such, but I am against the ease and laziness which it has brought into the church - a church which should be passionately on fire for God, a church which knows no limits to its desire to serve.

* **We have fallen asleep.** The enemy has played a siren call, and we have gone to sleep. While we have slept, he has planted weeds, built strongholds, polluted the church, destroyed pure leadership, and robbed us of our families, our morality and our national heritage.

If we can face these truths, then there is a fantastic promise in this opening line – **“fires to light my way.”** This is a key truth, which should be fixed in our minds whenever we study prophecy. Whatever God says, and however hard it is, his desire is to be with us. He is not a punishing God. He often has to judge his people, but only in order to bring them back into a right relationship with him, so that he can continue to call to the unsaved through us. God does not want the death of a sinner, and he needs a passionate church to live and proclaim this message. If we can allow him to reignite our passion, then this is his promise - “I will be with you.” This is exactly what he said to Joshua:- “No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Josh 1:5) This is what he said to his people through Zechariah after their return from exile:-”Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the Lord” (Zech 2:10) This is what he said to his church. “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

Word

Light the fire of repentance, that will burn away the dross, the weakness, the laziness, the sleep of my people. Then my people will be able to turn back from the way of desolation into which so many have strayed.

Bible background

2 Chron 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.”

Revelation 3:17-18 “You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.”

Jer 6:16 This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'”

Ps 107:4-8 “Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.”

Reflection

“Dross, the weakness, the laziness, the sleep.” Is this how God sees his people in Europe? It's a very hard estimate of us. In what ways are we weak? Driving through Germany recently, I saw the old watchtowers which used to line the border of East and West Germany. They are very broken down now, and unused. I'm sure they will soon disappear altogether. But what about the watchtowers of prayer? What about the responsibility of God's people to keep the Nations safe from evil? What about the responsibility to check the rampant materialism, greed and concentration on self? What about the growth of other religions, now challenging the place of Jesus as Lord of the Nations? Does this make us weak? Maybe not, but it shows us as unable or unwilling to take the responsibility of prayer, intercession and warfare which is the role of God's church in the world.

As I have shared the word for Europe, and also in the word for England, I get a similar response everywhere. “But my church is doing really well! We are growing, reaching out.” This misses the whole point of collective spiritual responsibility. The Lord looks at the spiritual temperature of the nations, not just the individual churches within them which might be doing good things. When the Lord looks at Europe, collectively, he finds the church lazy, and asleep. All around us, Islam is rising up, and if Turkey joins the EU, we will have to welcome 90 million more Muslims into the Union. As I have said on many occasions, I am not anti Muslim, but when it comes to the detail, Islam does not accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord. I read this the other day on a Canadian website. “Islam is young, and progressive. The West is old and exhausted.” Is that where we are? Are we old and exhausted, unable to face the radical challenge of the 21st century? Are we a collection of states, rushing to overturn centuries of bible based laws and customs, while a resurgent Islam is sweeping all before it?

It's encouraging that the Lord is calling for us to turn back. He is still with us, and it's not too late. We must turn back from **“desolation”** - from a path which is leading to destruction, and a path onto which we have strayed. I think that this sums up rather well why we are where we are. We have strayed. We didn't deliberately choose the path of desolation, but because of bad teaching, a loss of confidence in the word of the Lord, overwhelming circumstances which seemed to be against us, and a desire for something easier after a century of war, - all these conspired to lead us from the narrow path. But it is a narrow path which leads to victory. The Lord himself commended us to seek it and walk it (Matt 7: 12-14). Perhaps that was a mistake we, collectively, made. We failed to see how hard we would have to work to stay on the narrow path which would mean security and blessing for Europe. When East Germany existed, the church was very prayerful, it was costly to follow Jesus and there was a courage and confidence in the

East German church. This is the narrow path, which led to victory. I'm not convinced we are walking that path today.

Word

Light the fires of fervent expectation and longing for my return, absent from the lives of so many of my people.

Light the fire of urgent evangelism, the desire to gather the harvest while there is still time, before the summer passes and all is lost.

Light the fire of praise that a joyful sound may be rising to the Father's throne, a sound of rejoicing as the bridegroom prepares to come for the bride.

Bible background

Romans 13:11 "And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."

Jeremiah 8:20 "The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved."

Reflection

The Lord is looking for passion in his people, a passion which is aching for his return. But he doesn't find it. The church has settled for a nice steady pace in its mission and ministry. Nothing too exotic, just steady and balanced ministry - and one that is clearly failing to connect with 21st century Europe. But the Lord is looking for passion - passion which longs for his return so that he can assume his rightful place in his creation. The church of Ephesus was a very efficient and powerful church, but had lost its first love. When Jesus spoke to it, it wasn't to commend its fine programmes, but to plead for passion, for first love. Without it, we are dead, however many programmes we run.

Light the fire of praise. At first sight, this may seem to be a strange line to find in this prophecy. But praise is one of the weapons which can break through the strongholds, and make the way ready for Jesus.

- * When David brought the ark into Jerusalem, it was to the accompaniment of praise and worship, linked with dancing. (2 Samuel 6: 12-15)
- * When the Hebrews went up to Jerusalem, it was to the sound of praise.(Ps.118)
- * When Jesus was born, heaven echoed with praise. (Luke 2:13-14)
- * Praise is the key element of heaven. (Rev 4)

This praise is not happy singing, but music undergirded with hearts that are on fire for God's purity, his holiness, his people, his creation and his return. It's exciting to see that praise is the anthem of his return. For us, this is the moment of his triumph. The joyful king is coming to take his own. It may be bad news for the unrighteous, but not for us.

That's why we look forward to the day with joy, and that's why its postponement is such a heartache to us. It's a mystery to me why God's people in Europe seem to have replaced this fiery and joyful hope with something so dull, so orderly and so lifeless.

Second word

Long and hard is the path you must tread my servant, and lonely too. Many are the strongholds of the enemy that you must break down, and few are the hearts which will respond to your call. But do not be afraid. For I am with you.

Bible background

Isaiah 53:1 “Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

Reflection

This is a word to the man who speaks the message, and it's strange to find it included in the overall message. Yet it's vital that those who receive this word understand the cost to the messenger, for it will become their cost also. To act in accordance with God's will is always costly.

“Long, hard and lonely.” This is the classic biblical description of the experience of those who try to bring any kind of challenge to the people of God. Moses would agree with it, and so would Samuel, Nathan, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and, in its totality, Jesus. His path to Calvary was very hard and very lonely. His friends all left him at the gate of Gethsemane, and the final journey was a solitary one.

I have found the road of the prophet hard and lonely in Europe. Very few want to listen. Others want to obstruct, and these are the ones who often hold the keys to the church. When they slam the door, it remains slammed. The European word has brought me little in the way of encouragement. I once went to see a key Christian leader in Germany, but he wouldn't come out of his office to meet me. I preached in a church in Holland, and their comment was quite simple – “We want to hear good news, not this stuff.” I shared the message with a leader in Vienna, who then offered me coffee and cake, and quickly ushered me out into the street. In Paris, I spoke to one leader, who said, “There's a conference of prophets meeting in Paris today. They are the ones who you should see.” When I asked him to call them for me, he refused. I tried to make contacts in Italy, but no one would give me any help. Don't misunderstand, I'm not complaining. This is how it is with prophets. Europe is conforming to type. Long, hard and lonely - is this a reflection on the messengers, or on the church to which the messengers have tried to come?

What are the **strongholds** which need to be broken down? This is one of the keys to this word. Identifying the works of the enemy is the first step in destroying his strong places. We tend to look outwards, to atheism, Islam, occultism, secularism, materialism, selfishness, national interest and many others. We are right - these will all have to be

broken down. But the true beginning is to find those strong places which the enemy has dared to build within the household of faith, and tear these down. Pride, prosperity at the expense of endurance and struggle, power for ourselves, disguised as if it were for God, big ministries which exalt the minister and not the Lord, faith without suffering, consumerism without compassion, religion without power - these are just the beginnings of the problems which face us. Judgment must begin with the household of God.

Few seem to want to hear this message, and the messenger is often left with the message unshared. We already have the answer to this issue - **“Light the fire of repentance, that will burn away the dross, the weakness, the laziness, the sleep of my people.”** The church is resting in the sunshine, and anyone who wants to wake it up is not welcome. We will not be thanked for this message, but we don't need to worry - God is with us. If that's not enough, then don't become a bearer of this message, because there is nothing else.

Third word

Call out in the streets. Proclaim in the market place.

“The Lord is looking for his own, for hearts broken by the shame and guilt of the land, hearts grieving for the spoiling, for the destruction of the good things I gave, hearts breaking in repentance, hearts longing for my return.

These hearts, shining like lamps in dark places, are the ones who will prepare the way for my return.

But where are they? I call for them, but I hear no reply. I am searching, but I cannot find them. The sorrow in my heart is so great it almost crushes me.”

Word

Call out in the streets. Proclaim in the market place. “The Lord is looking for his own, for hearts broken by the shame and guilt of the land, hearts grieving for the spoiling, for the destruction of the good things I gave, hearts breaking in repentance, hearts longing for my return.”

Bible background

Nehemiah 1:4-7 “When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: “O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.”

Matthew 26:36-38 “Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane and told his disciples, “Stay here while I go over there and pray.” Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he plunged into an agonizing sorrow. Then he said, “This sorrow is crushing my life out. Stay here and keep vigil with me.” (Message)

Reflection

Now the messenger begins his work. After his initial challenge to the Church, and the explanation of his call, he begins to call. What is the messenger calling for? He is calling for the intercessors. They are to be the ones who do not look initially to the external situation, but to the internal one. They will feel the pain and sorrow in the heart of God for the failure of his people to live and be the people of God. They will feel the shame of this, and they will long to see and feel the spirit of repentance beginning to flow in the church in Europe. Some hard truths are contained here.

Firstly, we have to recognise that the serious and dangerous spiritual situation is the result of our carelessness and our prayerlessness. If the enemy has gained any ground, it is because we have not beaten him back. This has always been our responsibility. We are the watchmen - those who guard God’s church in Europe. We have failed in our European task. The Church has become small, isolated and irrelevant. The people of God have become closed to their National and International responsibilities. The Church has become caught up in itself, and has lost sight of its great responsibility. So the enemy has grown strong, and God’s heart grieves. The messenger calls for those who are able to feel this grief, and understand it, to come to the Lord for fresh anointing. Then their lights may shine out across the Church, and then across Europe.

Secondly these intercessors are going to be praying for the spirit of repentance to sweep the Church. What have we to repent of?

- * Our sleep.
- * Our arrogance and pride.
- * Our love of self.
- * Our failure to be God’s lamps shining in Europe.
- * Our failure to keep the prayer watchtowers occupied.
- * Our failure to understand our wider responsibilities.
- * The shame of the Church.
- * The lostness of the continent.

Is it our job to repent? Who else can do it? We are to offer the repentance of identification. We have to stand in the place of sinners, and in being identified with them, we can make an act of repentance which will move the heart of God.

Word

“These hearts, shining like lamps in dark places, are the ones who will prepare the way for my return. But where are they? I call for them, but I hear no reply. I am searching but I cannot find them. The sorrow in my heart is so great it almost crushes me.”

Bible background

Phil 2:14-16 “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life, in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing.”

Jer 35:17 “Therefore, this is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.'”

Reflection

The intercessors are the lamps of the Lord, shining in the darkest places, so that the nations can find their way back to him. I once had a vision for what was Yugoslavia. I was in a very dark place, and I was carrying a lamp. I could hear movement around me, and when I lifted my lamp, I saw countless numbers of people, lost in the darkness. They had no idea of which way to go because they had no light. I lifted high the lamp in my hand, and said “Follow this light.” Perhaps they did, perhaps they didn't - Yugoslavia is no more, and the sorrows of that area are beyond counting.

The intercessors are the lamps of God – so precious and so necessary. They are often alone, often isolated and ignored, their intercession unseen by any but the Lord. But they are vital to the future of God's people in Europe. And they are vital today, now, before the situation slips out of control, and the whole of the continent comes under judgment. These are the days for the intercessors of Europe to rise up and cry out. But where are they? Are there any there, and if there are, are there enough? And when are they going to come together to the spiritual heart of Europe, to cry out day and night for the salvation of nearly 500 million people and 28 nations?

What are we to make of **“I am searching but I cannot find them?”** If these words are from the Lord, they are clear enough. He is searching for these precious lamps. He is actively involved in a process of trying to find them. He needs to light them up at this time of danger, and to equip them again with anointing and power, with courage and endurance, with passion and perseverance. The lamps need tending, but, apparently, he cannot find them.

But there are plenty of intercessors around - I meet them regularly so what is it he cannot find? He cannot find European intercessors - those who will see the wider picture, and be lamps not just for those around them, or even those in their own land, but for the whole continent. It's time for the European lamps to meet, to support each other, and to call the national and local lamps to a higher level of intercession than they have ever known before. And he can't find them. If he can't find these lamps, then his sorrow is great. What will the consequences be for us?

The messenger begins his task, but again and again he seems to cry in vain. Why is this? Is it because the people do not hear, or because the people are not there? Is it because many refuse the burden of intercession, feeling either that they are unworthy, or that others will come to the call? Or is it an unwillingness to be disturbed, to be shaken from comfortable affluence, comfortable and easy to digest truth? Whatever the reason, it seems that the messenger is calling largely in vain. The burden of this crushes his Spirit, as it did the spirit of Jesus.

Fourth word

As an earthquake tears apart the land, so will be the sign of my coming. There will be disturbance in heaven and earth. Everything will be shaking, and men will cry out in fear “Who can be saved?” Do not fear my people, when you see these things. For they are the birth pangs of my coming.

Let your love increase. Your desire to serve be unbounded. Throw off your chains, your dependence on the things of this world which you love so much. Abandon yourselves to me, for I am your only place of safety.

Word

As an earthquake tears apart the land, so will be the sign of my coming. There will be disturbance in heaven and earth. Everything will be shaking, and men will cry out in fear “Who can be saved?”

Bible background

Matt 24:4-9 “Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ', and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.”

Hebs 12:25-27 “See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but

now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.”

Reflection

Those who open their hearts to the brokenness of the Continent, to the pain in the heart of the King, and to the movements in the heavenly places will quickly discern what is happening. This vision, granted only by the Holy Spirit, will quicken the spirit, as it did the prophet Habakkuk. (3:16) God commands us not to be afraid. Everything will begin to disintegrate, and we will feel the insecurity of the people, but we are not to fear. We are to thrust ourselves into service - into evangelism, into worship, into compassion, into caring, into warning, into prayer. We are to act - to be the signs of God’s imminence, and of God’s desperate compassion to save and bless all he can while there is still time, even in the darkest place.

Will this be fruitful? It will be, because, at last, the people will begin to see what is happening, a spirit of fear will invade them, and they will begin to ask the critical question - “Who can be saved?” For a similar episode in the life of Jesus, we can look at the stilling of the storm, and especially the cry of the disciples - “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” (Mark 4:38) It seems that only in desperation will the people of Europe begin to wake up to reality. It didn’t need to be this way, but this is the way it is now.

Word

Do not fear my people, when you see these things. For they are the birth pangs of my coming.

Bible background

Matthew 24:4-9 “Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.”

Reflection

“Do not be afraid” - this is to be our lifestyle and our message. We have no need to fear any cataclysm. Shadrach spoke for all of us when he said “Our God is able to save us, but even if our God does not save us, we will not bow down and worship your statue.” He knew in part what we know in full - we are safe in the heart of Jesus, even if we have to seek that heart in the middle of a storm. This is the message and the example we are to give - to the Church and to the world. We need not be amazed at the unbelief we will

encounter, both in the church and in the world. Remember Noah. But the compassion of Christ will drive us on. This is the outworking of the willingness to respond to the cry of God in the mouth of the messenger

Word

Let your love increase. Your desire to serve be unbounded. Throw off your chains, your dependence on the things of this world which you love so much. Abandon yourselves to me, for I am your only place of safety.

Bible background

Hebs 12:1-3 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Reflection

The Bible does not encourage us to take a back seat in the things of God. When the angel found the disciples gazing up into heaven, he said, in effect “What are you doing here? There’s work to be done!” If God is planning to move, and we are the lamps, then we have something to do:-

* **“Let your love increase.”**

It was lack of love which brought down the church in Ephesus. (Revelation 2:4) In the time of shaking, there is no room for “I told you so!” Those in difficulty need more love, not less.

* **“Desire to serve.”**

Jesus came to serve, (Mark 10:45) but in times of difficulty it is easy to look inwards, to our own needs. But people will need servants, to help them through the shaking. We are those servants.

* **“Throw off the chains of the world.”**

We must be careful, as we love and serve the world, that we don’t get trapped into worldly ways. We must throw off everything that hinders (Hebs 12:1) or as the Message puts it, “Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins.”

*** “Abandon yourselves to me.”**

This looks easy, but this abandoning ourselves to Jesus has never been easy. Abandoning ourselves to Jesus means throwing ourselves into greater, not lesser, sacrifice and service.

Fifth word

The only thing which can sustain my people is a clear vision of the kingdom of glory - that which is coming, into which they are born, and to which they belong.

Bible background

Acts 7: 54-56 “When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Reflection

Tough times lie ahead - tough for us all. How are we going to survive? We have to take Stephen’s point of view and look up at the glory which is coming when Jesus returns to take his rightful place. (Acts 7:56) Whatever is to happen it is not an accident, or history running out of control. Jesus is Lord of history, and we are moving by his direction to that day when he will appear. This is not escapism. We are challenged by these prophecies to do exactly the opposite to escape. We are called to be involved, to love, to serve, to evangelise, and to endure. We are challenged to be with the world as it shakes, and to be part of God’s solution to the shaking. The Christian faith is very definitely a “hands on” experience. But at the same time, we are part of something bigger, and glimpsing that greater plan gives us confidence and courage. “Open your eyes” said Jesus, (John 4:34) and we should do the same:-

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.

He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.” (Rev 21:1-8)

Sixth word

There will be much confusion at the end. Do not ask “Who is the lawless one?” or “where is the anti Christ?” Look to me and to your own hearts. Look to your own lives - to your praise, to your reaching out. Do not spend time on fruitless labour - keep your armour bright, and stick to your task.

Heaven is moving. The angels are going forth at my command. It is time for my people everywhere to examine their lives, to make ready. Do not delay, saying “tomorrow will be soon enough.” Cleanse and purify yourselves now.

Come in a solemn assembly.

Come to seek my face, not to exult in your own deeds.

Let your requests be few, your eyes open, your hearts ready to receive what I have to say.

Come, that I may prepare you - leaders and people alike - and show you the path in these days of tumult.

Seek me as you have never done before. Do not delay. Already the angels are going forth, and the enemy grows in strength. Prepare yourselves in my presence, while there is still time.

Word

There will be much confusion at the end. Do not ask “Who is the lawless one?” or “Where is the anti Christ?” Look to me and to your own hearts. Look to your own lives - to your praise, to your reaching out. Do not spend time on fruitless labour - keep your armour bright, and stick to your task.

Bible background

Joel 1:14 “Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.”

Matthew 24:26-28 “So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.”

Reflection

There will be much confusion at the end! Does that mean it can get worse than it is at present? Hard to imagine isn't it? But the times of shaking are always confusing. We all try to lead such regulated, controlled lives, that we may have lost the ability in Europe to endure the shaking. Times of shaking seldom allow for quiet and regulated lives. They require different characteristics:-

* **Time asking fruitless questions is a waste of time.** The shaking is coming on us, and the time for long hours of thoughtful questioning is over. The enemy is at the gate. It's time to stand up and resist. Those who love the Lord will know him when he appears, and those who don't have left it too late to start wondering.

* **We must fix our eyes on Jesus, and hang onto faith.** This will garrison our hearts against all that would destroy us. We are to praise, and to reach out. This is the perfect combination - the inward joy of lifting the name of Jesus, and the outward joy of trying to bring others into the safety and joy of a relationship with Jesus which will endure the shaking.

* **This calls for endurance.** We must keep our armour bright through prayer, worship, studying the Bible, intercession, evangelism and works of mercy. This is to be our daily experience. This is what will sustain us.

Word

Heaven is moving. The angels are going forth at my command. It is time for my people everywhere to examine their lives, to make ready. Do not delay, saying "tomorrow will be soon enough." Cleanse and purify yourselves now.

Bible background

2 Cor 6:2 "In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation."

Rev 10:1-4 "Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

Reflection

The shaking is not man centered, but is part of the purpose of God. This should be a great encouragement to God's people. We are not in the hands of those who do not believe, nor of an anonymous history. We are in the hands of the living God, who has decided that the moment has come. He has sent the angels out. We must purify ourselves, as God's people did at Mizpah. This makes us a useable people - one that God can move on and through.

Word

Come in a solemn assembly. Come to seek my face, not to exult in your own deeds. Let your requests be few, your eyes open, your hearts ready to receive what I have to say. Come, that I may prepare you - leaders and people alike - and show you the path in these days of tumult.

Bible background

Ps 27:8 "My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek."

Reflection

"Come in a solemn assembly." This is obviously a reference to Joel, but there are some questions and challenges here:-

*** Who is to come, and where will this happen?**

*** The challenge is to come and seek God's ways, not our own,** something we find hard to do. Joshua got into difficulty with this at Ai. Saul lost his kingship and kingdom with a similar mistake. David paid for his error with his son, and Ananias with his life. We find it very difficult to seek God, and to listen to him, without interrupting. The attitude of our hearts has to be a willingness to listen and learn. Then he can prepare us to find his path through the shaking.

*** What will those who come together do?**

It seemed so much easier in the Old Testament times for people to come together to hear from God. Today we have communications which span the world, but has also divided us up into small units. This is especially true for the people of God, who have let their vision shrink down to the walls of their own building. Somehow, a representative group of European Christians has got to come together to listen to the Lord. We have got so lost, that there is no hope of us ever finding our way back to his path. He must instruct us in the way in which we should go. That way will inevitably call for international, national and local repentance and cleansing. How this begins only God knows, but he is promising to tell us, if we will listen.

Word

Seek me as you have never done before. Do not delay. Already the angels are going forth, and the enemy grows in strength. Prepare yourselves in my presence, while there is still time.

Bible background

1 Sam 17:4-7 “A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armour of bronze weighing five thousand shekels. On his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver’s rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels.”

Rev 13: 1-4 “And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?”

Reflection

Time is running out, but we never seem to believe it. Parents who have had children know only too well that pregnancy has to end. The time runs down - months, weeks, days, hours. However, we find it very hard to believe that, in much the same way, the times of God are running down. One generation has to live through the shaking – this we know. It’s hard for us to accept that we are that generation. God sees it. Heaven sees it. We need to wake up and see it, or we will get caught out.

Seventh word

I need my light to shine - in your lives, in your hearts, in your homes, in your marriages. All over the land, these lights must shine, like lighthouses, to draw those who do not know me out of the confusion and darkness, and into my light. Tend your lamps carefully, for if you do not shine, many will be lost.

You need to shine more brightly now than ever in the past. This can only happen if you let go of the things of the world, and draw more closely to me.

Will you do this? Sacrifice the things of this world, which you value so much, and let my Holy Spirit raise you up to shine like stars.

Word

I need my light to shine - in your lives, in your hearts, in your homes, in your marriages. All over the land, these lights must shine, like lighthouses, to draw those who do not know me out of the confusion and darkness, and into my light.

Bible background

2 Peter 1:5-9 “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.”

Phil 2:15 “so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.”

Reflection

The quality of our lives is going to matter a great deal in the difficult days that are ahead. As we maintain our purity, so the difference between light and darkness will be shown in our lives. This purity is not for our own benefit. We are going to heaven when we die because of the blood of Jesus, not because of our works. This purity will be a lighthouse, shining into the darkness, so that those who are lost in the darkness can see our light, and by it, reach out for salvation in Jesus.

Some Christian teachers, over the centuries, have said that it doesn't matter how we live, as we are saved and forgiven. But nothing could be further from the truth. We try to lead lives of purity not only because that's what Jesus taught us, but because these pure lives are lighthouses. If these lighthouses go dark then what hope is there for the lost and shaking world?

Word

Tend your lamps carefully, for if you do not shine, many will be lost.

Bible background

Matt 25:7 “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.”

Reflection

This is urgent warfare. We are not being invited to shine, we are being commanded to shine. If we don't, it spells disaster for many people.

Word

You need to shine more brightly now than ever in the past. This can only happen if you let go of the things of the world, and draw more closely to me.

Will you do this?

Sacrifice the things of this world, which you value so much, and let my Holy Spirit raise you up to shine like stars.

Bible background

Mark 10: 21-22 “Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.”

Reflection

We've heard this before in this long series of prophesies. We must shine, let go, draw close, sacrifice.

But now comes the key question - “Will you do this?” Incredible though it may seem, the Lord asks and does not demand. He wants hearts which are willing to yield to his word, and to his call. Is our response to be based on how we see Europe? That would be very bad theology. Our response has to be based on how we see God, and our willingness to feel his heart. If we are open to him, then of course we will yield and say “Yes.” But if we are concerned only with ourselves, our own needs and our own small vision, then it will be “no.” Will God then force us? If any of us have to ask this question, then we have missed the point.

Eighth word

The enemy draws strength from fear, deceit, distrust, lies, the lust for power, immorality, greed. These are his weapons. This is what holds men in bondage. See that none of them are found in you.

Bible background

Galatians 5: 16-26 “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”

Reflection

Satan trembles at the prospect of the Church of God in Europe beginning to move forward together. So he must move against us, before it is too late. Outright confrontation is never his preferred method. He likes to work in the dark, and he likes to work within the hearts of the people of God. Then, as he was able with Judas, he can strike what appears to be a fatal blow. As this message draws to its end, the messenger turns again to the people of God. He warns of the methods of the enemy, and challenges the people of God to keep a sharp lookout on their own hearts, so that none of these weapons can be used against them.

Ninth word

I saw tiny streams of white hot fire burning into the hard rock of the church in Europe. I saw hearts on fire with fervour, zeal, expectation. The hard cold rocks cracked and split, and there were loud explosions as they yielded - some to life and some to death. The hard rocks could not resist or stand against the fire.

Then the Lord spoke finally to me:- “Decide my people - will you be alive or dead at the day of my coming?”

Bible background

Malachi 3:2 “But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?”

Reflection

If the other eight words are from God, then this one is inevitable. With Europe shaking apart, and the enemy rampant, the background for the Lord's return is beginning to be prepared. We are not yet at the parousia, but we might be approaching it. Decisions have to be made. As always the choice rests with us. God works with his people in a partnership, which allows us the freedom to choose what we will be. At the end of his message, the messenger places the challenge at the feet of the people of God. The Lord has plans - to return to His creation. What kind of Church will he find? The answer to this question rests in our hands.

Final word from the messenger

"Therefore keep watch." This was the Lord's great commission to his people, as the end times scenario unfolded before them. In failing to keep watch, the Churches in Asia of John's day were exposed to a string of deeply disturbing and weakening illnesses, which threatened their very existence. Today the Churches in Europe face similar problems as the pressure mounts, and as the Lord begins to focus on the time for his return.

My own fear is that the Churches in Europe have become too comfortable, too self centered, and too concerned with trivial issues, and have lost the ability to lift up their eyes to see the wider picture. They have turned in on themselves, looking at their own particular Nation, City, Town, or Church. There has been a loss of overall vision for God's wider working. So there is not a prepared people across the Continent, waiting for the Lord's return - longing for it, expecting it, and living in the light of the imminence of that great event.

My hope is that Christians and Churches will wake up to what is happening, and will become a people on fire for the Lord, filled with the blessings he has in store for the Overcomers, and so be ready to receive Him.

What if they do not? God is compassionate and merciful, but not to be played around with. The people of Israel soon found, after their exodus from Egypt, that ignoring God could be a very costly business, despite his great love for them. Do we want forty years in the wilderness, until all this generation has perished? Frighteningly, the choice is ours.

Rev Jim Smith

Jim Smith has been involved in the prophetic ministry for 25 years. He has a wide experience of teaching prophecy and exercising a prophetic ministry in 50 countries. He has written extensively on prophecy and prophetic issues, and all these materials are available for free download.

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