



CHAPTER 3

Preparation Rather Than Panic

As followers of Christ, we are poised to recognize danger with informed insight and composed foresight. That means we hold prophetic revelation fortified with confident assurance. Warfare, chaos, and disaster ignite in us an urgency to pray, plan, and proceed with God's help. Sustained by His strength, courage, and comfort, we utilize every advantage that He offers, including spiritual armor, spiritual weapons, spiritual gifts, and spiritual fruit.

Apocalyptic events may be unavoidable; perhaps they are imminent. Yet, few dare to contemplate worse case scenarios—for good reason. Worrying about impending danger generates fear and anxiety, which are counterproductive and harmful. Paul said,

“be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”
(Phil 4:6 NAS)

Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray with an expectation that focuses on divine solutions rather than the problem. He said,

“whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24 ESV)

Events leading to the Eschaton are not hypothetical scenarios. Being caught unprepared presents a dreadful disadvantage. The wrath of God and the rage of Satan are functional forces—they operate with supernatural intensity. When spiritual conflicts intensify, adversarial chaos

materializes. The best time to prepare for a global catastrophe is before it happens.

While emphasizing worldwide persecution and tribulation, Jesus charged His disciples to pray for strength—strength to escape and strength to stand before Him. He said,

“keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36 NAS)

James adds the following exhortation,

You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. (James 5:8 NAS)

An Unprecedented Detour Will Lead to a Perfect Ending

“In the last days, God says, ... I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Acts 2:16-21 NIV)

Apocalyptic events will exert an enormous influence on humanity. While terror and fear paralyze some, others will recognize their need to connect with Jesus for salvation. Each sign beckons us to acknowledge the truth about God and embrace the truth about ourselves. Each wonder prompts us to rely on His supernatural support.

Jesus realizes the immense value of every human being. He loves each person with unquenchable passion and pursues our salvation with aggressive determination. God’s love will not compromise His eternal priorities. That means Jesus will do whatever it takes to enable everyone to connect with the truth about Him.

When the wrath of God and the rage of Satan erupt, history-as-usual will make an abrupt detour. Conventional remedies will be futile. Traditional relief will be inadequate. As world leaders fret and panic, global

conflicts will accelerate—until they obliterate the status quo. Solutions for apocalyptic problems will not emerge from a political consensus or religious accord. Fear, dread, and anger thrust nations into anarchy. Warped by insecurity and confusion, frustration and grief trigger acts of desperation.

We cannot see God’s innovative solutions while cowering in a rut of tradition. When mass pandemonium breaks out, human nature tends to gravitate toward familiar routines. While some habits offer welcomed comfort and security, others limit novel responses beyond the status quo.

A Royal Anointing

When my wife and I landed in Tel Aviv, annihilation threats strained the geopolitical climate. Iran accelerated its nuclear program vowing to wipe Israel off the map. That same day, 5 March 2012, Prime Minister Netanyahu visited Washington DC. He asserted Israel’s



right to self-defense warning that “time was growing short”.¹ The President of the United States shared this concern but advocated sanctions and diplomacy to restrain Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

The next day we joined more than 160 others for a nine-day “Baruch HaBa” event to survey the land and pray. Baruch Haba means “blessed is he who comes”. After issuing 7 woes to the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said, *“For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**’”*² Tents of Mercy, Revive Is-

¹ The Associated Press, “Netanyahu: Israel Has Right To Defend Itself”, March 5, 2012 (Speaking to the America Israel Public Affairs Committee).

<http://www.npr.org/2012/03/05/148012460/netanyahu-israel-has-right-to-defend-itself> (accessed March 5, 2012)

² Matthew 23:29 ESV

rael, and Tikkun International hosted this international intercessory prayer tour.

After visiting Tel Megiddo (i.e., Armageddon) on March 8th, Baruch HaBa gathered in Haifa to celebrate the Feast of Purim on the rooftop of a Messianic community. Spiritual leaders from fourteen nations prayed for Israel and read a scripted account of Queen Esther’s heroism. One Jewish woman with a royal anointing saved her people from a decreed annihilation threat. With fasting and prayer, Esther secured the support of Ahasuerus, King of Persia, i.e., of ancient Iran. The outcome of her courage permitted Jews everywhere to assemble and defend one another from a similar annihilation threat—using swords and spears.³



When people experience epic moments of history, they rarely comprehend the importance of their contribution at the time. We are no exception as we pray, fast, and intercede as Esther did for Israel’s protection during this critical time in history.

Following the Feast of Purim on March 8, news reports confirmed heightened tensions associated with Israel’s conflict. Between March 9 and March 15, militants had fired over 300 Grad missiles, rockets, and mortars from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel. Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) retaliated with 37 air strikes in Gaza targeting weapons manufacturing and storage facilities, rocket launching sites, training bases,

³ Esther 8:11

posts, tunnels and terror operatives.⁴ As Baruch HaBa continued to pray and tour historic sites in the north, one million Israeli residents huddled in bomb shelters in the south less than 50 miles from Jerusalem.

Both mature and emerging spiritual leaders from virtually every continent participated in this intercessory tour. We saw the sights, sang the songs, prayed the prayers, and purchased token souvenirs. Some of us contributed humanitarian aid to a storehouse operated by Tents of Mercy. We prayed for God to transform eager sightseers into valiant leaders. Mordecai's advice to Ester continues to resonate with leaders today.

“For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14 ESV)

Discerning God's Mission

Jesse sent his youngest son David on a fact-finding mission—as a sightseer. Like the participants in Baruch HaBa, David provided some humanitarian aid and requested a token (souvenir) from the battlefield.

*“And Jesse said to David his son, **Take for your brothers** an ephah of this parched **grain**, and these ten **loaves**, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. Also take these ten **cheeses** to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and **bring some token** from them.”* Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines [less than 30 miles (49 km) from the March 2012 rocket attacks near the Gaza Strip]. (1 Samuel 17:17-19 ESV)

Shortly after David arrived, his oldest brother accused him of *mission creep*. Originally, this term was applied “exclusively to military opera-

⁴ Wikipedia, List of Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel, 2012.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Palestinian_rocket_attacks_on_Israel,_2012#March_9.E2.80.9315 (accessed 3-30-12).

tions, but has recently been applied to many different fields, mainly the growth of bureaucracies.”⁵ Eliab said, “*Why have you come down here? ...I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.*”⁶ These harsh accusations missed the mark.

David carried tremendous spiritual authority even in his youth. Because the Prophet Samuel had anointed him for leadership, a royal anointing with prophetic significance was seeking to emerge. After hearing annihilation threats from Goliath for 40 days, David decided to do more than watch the grownups fight.

God authorized David for international warfare—for giant slaying. His mission involved confronting a gigantic crisis, which threatened his destiny and the destiny of his nation. David’s mission went beyond feeding his brothers, discerning their welfare, and reassuring his father with a token souvenir. By summoning a mature dose of strength and cultivated courage, David decapitated Israel’s intimidating foe. He delivered his nation from mass destruction and led his people in a heroic victory.

Unconventional Problems Require Unconventional Solutions

David’s intimate connection with God enabled him to peer beyond popular opinion and conventional wisdom. He arrived on the scene as a sightseer but returned in command of a royal anointing. David addressed and solved a gigantic international problem with one smooth stone. Goliath was a historic anomaly with life-threatening consequences. He presented a unique challenge, one that required a daring response inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Ordinary weapons and standard armor are useless against the Goliath-sized threats that jeopardize our future. King Saul’s armor and weapons were inadequate for giant slaying. Therefore, God inspired

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mission_creep (3-17-06)

⁶ 1 Sam 17:28 NIV

David to defeat this foe by venturing outside the box of traditional hand-to-hand combat.

God has a way of addressing complicated problems with simple solutions. He used a young man with a royal anointing to sling a single stone at an international crisis. This unconventional act of courage resolved a complex dilemma. One solitary worshiper changed the course of history with a rock. He proclaimed the truth about God by living up to the truth about himself. While more experienced warriors stood as spectators, David implemented a dauntless solution.

When propelled by faith, living stones like David and Ester achieve the purpose of God in their generation. They tear down spiritual strongholds and secure material victories, *“For nothing is impossible with God.”*⁷

We Occupy a Finite Place in History—in Preparation for Eternity

During a crisis, normal priorities undergo an urgent reshuffling. Status quo routines become obsolete. More than ever, we need to connect with Jesus Christ for sustaining strength and heroic courage. The greater the crisis, the greater our need to activate our royal anointing.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people..... (1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV)

Previous Chapter: Portending Danger Earthquakes Plagues and Asteroids

Next Chapter: Eschaton Terminology

Home

Connecting with God

Connecting with Truth

An Audacious Future

⁷ Luke 1:37 NIV