

# GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

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## Spiritual Survival

### Part 10

## The State of Living

By Rayola Kelley

Before I became a Christian, I was in what I refer to as "survival mode." I am sure some of you know what it is like to be in such a state. Your main goal is to somehow get through each day. It is as though great weights are bound around your feet. It takes everything in you to get through daily responsibilities, knowing that you must face tomorrow with the same vain heaviness. Even though you have no real hope that tomorrow will be any different, you figure that the present waves moving through the avenues of your life will cause you to somehow bump along from one responsibility to the next, from one challenge to the next, from one crisis to the next, and from one minute to the next.

Bumping along with the waves of daily life is not what many would consider as "living life." Granted, it is what it is, and it is also a state that many find themselves confronting. To most people this state is, at best, "surviving" with some success and at worst it is simply "existing." When one is bumping along with the waves and tides of life, he or she is living in what I consider to be a comatose state.

When it comes to a comatose state, physically people go through the motions of daily responsibilities, but they lack any real concern about what is happening outside of their small worlds. Emotionally such individuals are closed down except for an occasional stirring of excitement for the temporary pleasure of life or an outburst of self-pity, frustration, or



anger, which alerts those around them that they are still among the living. Spiritually, they are dulled down by hopeless despair that lacks any real expectation towards the future. These individuals have been disillusioned by life, disappointed by hopelessness, betrayed by broken dreams, left in utter despair by wrecked promises, and fearful of the future. In fact, as they look behind them, all they can see is debris, and when they look forward, all they can see is the emptiness of wasted space, time, and energy.

I can remember this state well. It all started initially because of the arrogance of my fleshly, unregenerate state. I had zealously gone forward to meet life head on, only to be rolled under by the challenges of life. At that point, life became too vast, and unpredictable to me. I realized I could not control it, and it was about to take me out into an ocean of uncertainty and despair. It was at this time that I decided I was going to survive, but as the waves beat against my resolve, a cloud of depression began to engulf me into an endless whirlpool of despondency. At this time, a morbid darkness gripped my soul. My resolve to survive gave way to suicidal thoughts, anger towards life, resentment that I had to go on in my present condition, and a heaviness that felt like a vice grip around my heart.

It was in such a state that I began to cry out for a solution. I did not know where to look, what I was looking for, and what would I do when I found it, but nevertheless, I was looking. However, in a comatose state, there is no expectation present to find the solution. You look around without seeing, you search without finding, and you grope along without touching anything that you could consider substantial to hold onto. Once again, you feel the cloud of depression take a greater hold on you as you realize that you have not begun to even imagine the depth this depression could reach.

The truth is, most of us have experienced this state at one time or another. Perhaps, the description of it may vary, but the end results are the same. At this time, many people come to the end of themselves and discover that there is no real substance for them to continue to stand upon. To simply "survive" life will eventually leave you without strength, and to simply "exist" will leave you without any real substance.

As we face the darkness enfolding the world, it is important to consider our state of living. Much of our state of living will be determined by the type of relationship we have with God. It will not be enough to dance on the outside fringes of Christianity, take on some religious pose, or get involved with some great noble movement, we must be sure that we are in the direct current of the eternal life (Jesus) that flows according to the Rivers of Living Water (Holy Spirit). We must not take on some form of life, we must possess the life of the Son of God. The life of heaven is not a tide that flows in and out; rather, it is a current that flows from the throne of God. It is eternal, unchangeable, and unstoppable.

The key to standing in the darkness is to ensure the presence, consistency, and flow of the life of Jesus in us. In order to withstand the affront of darkness, we must develop the necessary substance that will cultivate the life of Jesus in us; and, to continue to stand when darkness is consuming everything around us, we must understand what it means to stand according to the authority of Christ and in the power of His Spirit.

To be able to stand, we must be born again of the Spirit according to faith established and confirmed by the Word, but to withstand will require something called, "integrity." We are told in *1 Kings 9:4* that King David walked according to the integrity of his heart. Integrity points to upright character. Such character is best described as moral uprightness.

It is not uncommon that people interchange the concept of honesty and integrity. However, they are different. Granted, integrity involves honesty, but honesty may be void of integrity. What distinguishes the two is moral uprightness. You do not need to be morally upright to be honest, but you must possess moral character to possess integrity. When we are honest about something that is not pleasant, we are often trying to maintain some dignity or respect in the matter, but when we insist on personal integrity, we do so to avoid betraying who we are. At the end of the day, integrity allows us the freedom to look at ourselves in the mirror without shame or regret.

Clearly, integrity is that inward substance of strength that keeps us from veering off of what we know is right. It is that inner character that possesses resolve that will not be moved when tested and the right spirit that will not compromise what it knows to be true. However, such inner character is not given; rather it is forged in times of testing and adversity.

A good example of the forging of character can be observed in the establishment of faith. We know that faith is established and refined in the ovens of adversity (*1 Peter 1:6-9*). What many do not understand is that what is being established is integrity in our faith towards God, and what is being refined is the attitude that must be present to walk according to such integrity. Remember, we must walk out the Christian life by faith (*2 Corinthians 5:7*). Integrity is what strengthens the legs of faith to walk in the ways of righteousness. It is for this reason that integrity allows God to take shepherd boys and turn them into kings, servants into military giants, and timid people into courageous leaders.

It will take integrity for us to stand, withstand, and continue to stand in the times we live in. Therefore, we must ensure that integrity is forged in us as the very life of Christ is cultivated and nurtured in our inner man. Let us now consider what integrity entails.

*State:* Integrity is a state that you live in. It is a perpetual awareness of who you are in the Lord and

what you are doing in your life before Him. This awareness is established and maintained by living within the confines of moral rightness and excellent conduct.

*Choice:* The state of integrity is only developed when an individual makes the right choices in regard to God, life, and conduct. Integrity will cause the person to ensure this state by choosing what he or she exposes him or herself to, the companions he or she keeps, the agendas that are adopted, and what is pursued.

The choice of integrity reminds us that we must honestly choose the life God has made available to each of us (*Deuteronomy 30:19*). This means choosing the narrow ways of righteousness to secure the blessings and promises of God. I can testify that there is no drudgery in this type of life. Instead of settling for a survival mode, as a believer, I have pressed forward to experience the full, satisfying life of heaven.

The truth is personal integrity will not let a person off the hook. It serves as a moral compass in matters. For example, it will not heed to the path of least resistance by becoming flippant, complacent, and apathetic when it comes to finishing the course. In the Christian realm, it will go against the grain when tempted to give in to the arrogant, self-serving ways of the flesh. It will ultimately overcome the flesh.

*Preference:* Once integrity is worked in our inner character, it will cease to be an option that we must initially struggle with before it becomes our solution; rather, it will become the preferred way in which we walk. We are told that man prefers darkness because his deeds are wicked (*John 3:19-21*). Integrity has nothing to hide; therefore, it is not wooed by darkness to give in to the base way of the old man. Instead it will flee such darkness and walk in the liberating light of God's righteousness.

The more that a believer chooses the ways of righteousness, the more the bent on his or her preference will change from the base ways of the old man towards the righteous ways of the new man. The more the bent is realigned to moral uprightness, the more natural the state of righteousness will become a normal preference for the Christian. The war between the flesh

and the Spirit will cease to rage and become a whimper at best. And, the more righteousness is established and practiced, the more the person will exercise unto godliness.

As I observe the world, the more I become increasingly aware that this inner character is a must if we, as believers, are going to endure and overcome the great temptation that is upon the world. It is time for God's people to put off the appearance of righteousness, the pose of pious religion, and the robes of self-righteousness, and in humility put on the Lord Jesus Christ (*Romans 13:14*). Godly integrity will allow us to wear the Christian life well in a dark world. It will become a means by which the light of Christ's life will shine with authority, as well as penetrate the darkness with power and hope.

It is obvious that we have a short window of opportunity to secure our life in Christ before the night comes when no man can work. We must choose the ways of our Lord. In other words, we must choose the ways of integrity. In doing so we will determine the life we live and who we become in the end. Instead of feeling like a cork on the ocean of life, we will possess the anchor that will keep us steady in the way we walk out our Christian life.

We do determine the life we live by choosing the way we walk. The choice for the believer is clear. Joshua talked about choosing who we are going to serve in *Joshua 24:15*. However, the prophet Amos summarized it best when he said, "*Seek the LORD, and ye shall live*" (*Amos 5:6*). †

## QUOTABLE

"A life can only yield its treasures when it is smitten." - Herbert Lockyer

"The Bible is Christ portrayed; Christ is the Bible fulfilled. One is the Picture, the other is the Person, but the features are the same and proclaim their identity." - Dr. A. T. Pierson

"God never gives us grace in advance." - Herbert Lockyer

"Forcible revolution is not the Bible way to correct social evils. The cause of man's inhumanity lies in his own fallen nature. The gospel attacks the root cause, and offers a new creation in Christ Jesus." - William MacDonald

## THE RING

By Jeannette Haley

It began as one of those ordinary days—you know, a day where nothing is too exciting, too dull, too demanding or too anything. Even the weather played along with a one-note gray sky that was neither too wet, too dry, too hot, nor too cold. Carrie had gone out for a long walk, while Rayola and I opted to sink into the couch instead of sinking into the abundance of mud that used to be our dusty driveway. Content with a hot cup of tea, a hunk of dark chocolate, and a good book, I hardly noticed when, some time later, Carrie burst through the door. I remember hearing the words, “I found a ring,” but, not quite believing what I thought I heard, I asked, “You found a what?”

“A ring. I found a ring.”

“What kind of a ring?” My imagination was conjuring up dual images of rings. One was of an impeccable gold ring, heavy with valuable gemstones, while the other was the gaudy plastic kind that kids win from a gum machine.

“This one,” she said as she held it out for our examination. “It was in a mud puddle.”

Fascination began to trickle over me like fairy dust. The ring was badly damaged, obviously from being run over multiple times. It was neither gold and heavily jeweled, nor was it a cheap imitation. Instead, it was silver, and still boasted eight small diamonds in their settings, four on each side of the.... I wish I could go on to say, “the huge diamond in the center.” Sadly, all the crushing and beating had probably taken its toll, for the prongs were flattened and the crowning glory of the ring was gone. Even some of the diamond chips that had been skillfully fitted on either side of the band where the little diamonds were still intact, were missing, yet enough remained to give mute testimony of what a grand and beautiful ring it had once been. A feeling of sadness rushed over me as I began to imagine the grief some unknown woman must’ve felt when she some-



how lost this once-beautiful ring.

“Do you think the big diamond is somewhere in the mud puddle?” I asked hopefully.

“I don’t know,” came the honest answer.

“Well, let’s go see if we can find it,” I said, still glued to the couch. I was tired, and it was going to be a struggle for my curiosity to get the better of my physical slump. However, my active imagination began to kick in, and when it takes over, it’s only a matter of time before action follows. I tried in vain to resume my little time of rest and recreation, but eventually Carrie and I found ourselves pulling on boots, and zipping up hooded jackets. The expedition to the mud puddle had begun.

By the time we arrived at the general location of where she found the ring, the scene had somewhat changed from what it had been earlier in the day. Melting ice had exposed a larger area of pavement, and there were mud puddles everywhere. Carrie wasn’t quite sure just which one had held the treasure, so we tried to casually scan the puddles and potholes as best we could while keeping an eye on traffic. It was obvious from the start that finding a loose diamond that had been most likely missing for a long time in such an environment was next to impossible. I told myself to face that fact that it was lost. Gone. Forever. But, I simply could not get the ring out of my mind.

For the next couple of days I would catch myself mentally drifting into the uncharted, roadless territory of the imagination where words like “maybe,” “suppose,” and “what if” preceded unfounded explanations to the mystery surrounding the ring. “Maybe somebody stole the ring, removed the big diamond in order to hock it, and then drove for miles before tossing the ring out into the street.” “Why would anybody do that?” I asked myself. “After all, the ring was worth far more when it was in one piece.” “What if some poor woman was so miserably married that she tore the ring off her finger and tossed it into the street.” “On the other hand, suppose somebody was moving out of the neighborhood, and the ring somehow got lost, and then the rain washed it away....” “But, look at how terribly beat up that ring is! It could’ve been in the street for a long

time.” “Maybe the ring got caught up in a tire, and then flipped out into the mud puddle.” “That big diamond has to be somewhere out there...” An endless procession of fascinating and possible explanations paraded through my mind as I found myself becoming increasingly preoccupied with the ring.

To me, the ring was more than just a scarred and battered piece of jewelry. In its mute way it told a story—a story of hope, beauty, joy, and love. The ring had been uniquely and specially designed by a master hand. Someone had purchased the ring with joy, and most likely bestowed it upon the woman who was the object of his affections. Whatever tragic circumstances transpired after that, however, will forever remain a mystery. The ring was posted in the local paper in the “Found” section, but no one called to identify and claim it.

As I pondered the sad fate of the ring one day, the Spirit spoke to my heart. In an instant my focus on the ring was caught up and swept into another perspective where the lost state of the ring was overshadowed by the lost state of humanity. The message was clear. How easy it is to become obsessed with the “lost” things of this world, when, instead, as believers, we should be consumed with the reality of lost souls for whom Christ died. After all, mankind was created, like the center gem in a beautiful ring, to be the crowning glory of God’s creation. He was designed to reflect the glory of God, much like an expertly cut gemstone reflects the light. *“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well” Psalm 139:14* *“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end” Ecclesiastes 3:11.* *“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” Genesis 1:a.*

Into this perfect world entered a deceiver, a thief, a killer, and destroyer. But, praise be to God, He sent His Son to destroy all the works of the devil. *“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life,*

and that they might have it more abundantly" *John 10:10*. Like the lost ring, sin batters and scars the lost soul, separating us from God. Sin blurs, mangles, and destroys the original design and glorious purpose for which God created us. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" *Romans 3:23*; "For the wages of sin is death" *Romans 6:23a*. Sin brings us into a total state of eternal ruin: "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" *Ezekiel 18:4c*. Thank God, we are not left without a way of escape, and that way is Jesus, who declared, "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray" *Matthew 18:11-13*. There is a question that must be asked: how can the love of God dwell in us if we have no compassion or concern for the lost souls around us?

Perhaps today you can relate to the ring. Once you shined beautiful and bright, but then wrong decisions and contrary circumstances brought you to a place of ruin and loss. You are in despair because you have no way of putting the pieces of your life back together again. Like the ring, you lost something that was once beautiful in your life, and now you feel scarred and mangled. There may be others who are like the lost sheep—wandering in a spiritual wilderness that is dark, barren, and frightening. You know that you strayed from the Shepherd of your soul, but you don't know how to find your way back again, and the hopelessness of being lost is more than you can bear. There may be someone reading this who has fallen prey to the thief and liar. You know that you are captive to something dark and sinister. You've fought and struggled, but you do not know how to be set free. Regardless of your circumstances, regardless of how you feel, where you are, or what you've done, there is One who knows all about it. He was there when you were conceived, there when you were brought forth, there when you took

your first breath, and there when you hit the lowest point in your life. He stands before you now, arms outstretched. He is only a prayer away.

Consider this: "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" *Psalms 139:1-12*. Jesus says to you, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" *Luke 4:18*.

The ring Carrie found will never be restored to its original state of perfection and beauty. We'll never know the story that surrounds it, or how it came to be brought to such a state of loss and ruin. Only God knows where the center diamond is. It goes without saying, however, that it is far more important to know that if we are in Christ, and He is in us, we can never be lost. He is the crowning jewel in our lives. Jesus promises, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" *John 8:12*. John wrote, "In him was life: and the life was the light of men" *John 1:4*. In *2 Corinthians 4:6* we have this promise, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Jesus commanded His followers to, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" *Matthew 5:16*

If you have never opened up your heart to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior, why haven't you? You have everything to gain, and nothing to lose except separation from God in an eternal hell. Jesus wants to redeem and restore you to the glory that God originally planned for you. Jesus tells us, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water [the Word] and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" *John 3:5-7*. (Emphasis added.) "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" *Acts 4:12*. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent" *John 17:3*.

Jesus is saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" *Revelation 3:20*. Will you open the door to Him now? For, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" *Revelation 22:17*. †

## QUOTES

"Formerly the heretics were manifest, but now the Church is filled with heretics in disguise." - Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lecture X*

"It is out of truth that falsehood is built; out of religion that superstition is compacted." - Tertullian, *On Fasting*

"In the Church of God the teacher's error is the people's trial." - Vincent of Lerins, *A Commonitory*

"Witchcraft is somebody trying to get you to agree with their reality." - Rayola Kelley

"Even a rock is smarter than an atheist or an evolutionist according to Luke 19:40!" - Jeannette Haley

## RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

**Q:** *Why didn't the Jews believe Jesus was their Messiah?*

**A:** It is important to point out that the first Church was made up of believing Jews. This simply shows us that salvation, even for the Jews, is a personal matter. I have had the wonderful privilege of meeting some of these people and hear how they came to the saving knowledge of their Messiah. However, due to their unbelief as a nation towards Jesus in His first advent, darkness came over them as a people. They became blinded to the truth of Jesus being their Messiah.

The Word of God speaks about this unbelief towards Jesus. In *John 1:10-11*, we are told how the world would not recognize Him, but the Jewish people would not receive Him. On the "shirttails" of these Scriptures follow this glorious promise, "*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*" (*John 1:12*).

Jesus explained the spiritual condition of the Jewish people in *Matthew 13:14-16*. He was actually quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, declaring that it was being fulfilled, "*By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should hear them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*" As the last Scripture states a person can see and hear, but his or her heart needs to be open and receptive to receive from the Lord.

Due to the religious system, the Jewish people did not have the heart to hear the truth nor the eyes to see Jesus. Granted, they were looking for Him, but He did not come in the way they expected. Their eyes were only conditioned to see Him as a victorious King who would set up a new Jewish kingdom, not as a Passover Lamb who came to redeem. As a result, their understanding was dulled as their ears became deaf to the truth and their eyes

became closed to those very things that confirmed His identity. In essence, they refused to believe what was even being made obvious by the pure, miraculous, and incredible. John the Baptist made this statement about the religious system that was in place, "*And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire*" (*Matthew 3:10*).

God is not surprised or limited by circumstances. Once again, we must remember people are saved individually and the blindness that is present where the Jewish people are concerned has to do with national Israel. When we receive Christ, the veil of darkness is taken away from our minds and hearts (*2 Corinthians 3:13-16*). However, God has taken what could be considered a tragedy and has turned it around as a blessing. We are told in *Romans 11:8-12* that a spirit of slumber resides on national Israel so that full salvation can come to the Gentiles. Subsequently, it would be the believing Gentiles that would provoke Israel to jealousy concerning their Messiah. As the parable of the prodigal son reveals, Israel will one day come home seeking forgiveness and restoration with God.

The prophet Zechariah talks about the complete spiritual and physical restoration of Israel as a nation in *chapters 12-14*. Sadly, there will only be a third of the Jewish people saved, but when their Messiah comes back to set up His kingdom in that day, they will be ready to recognize and receive Him as the Promised One. In spite of the erroneous teachings that the Church is national Israel, God made a covenant with Abraham in regard to his biological seed and God has not forgotten those promises nor would He become unfaithful towards them by taking them away from national Israel and giving them to another. That would be like taking the wedding ring of a former spouse and giving it to a new one. God is committed to bring forth His covenants and promises in regard to both national Israel and the Church. Therefore, we can be assured that we will see every one of Zachariah's prophecies about Israel fulfilled to the glory of Jehovah God. †

## ***The Harbinger: Is This God's Final Warning to America?***

**By Jan Markell**

**[www.olivetreeviews.org](http://www.olivetreeviews.org)**

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The short answer to that question is, I don't know. I do not know if author Jonathan Cahn was given a message from God or if he has authored rambling fiction. I have carefully looked at the book, *The Harbinger: The Ancient Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future*, which is written in novel form but is not a novel. *World Net Daily* publisher, Joseph Farah, has made a film out of the book: *The Isaiah 9:10 Judgment*. The film is remarkably well done, and the book and film make a powerful one-two punch. Every reader and viewer must draw their own conclusion.

Jonathan is the Messianic Rabbi of Beth Israel Congregation in Wayne, NJ. "Before its destruction as a nation, ancient Israel received nine harbingers -- prophetic omens of warning," he says. "The same nine harbingers are now manifesting in America with immediate ramifications for end-time prophecy."

This verse in Isaiah is referring to the attitude of the people of the northern kingdom of Israel the first time they were attacked by the Assyrians. Instead of repenting and returning to God, they were defiant, boasting that they would rebuild better than before. So, the judgment upon their nation proceeded as it seems to be with America.

I have talked to Cahn both on air and privately. Cahn insists he is not a prophet but a "watchman" who doesn't want the blood on his hands -- *Ezekiel 33:6*. There we read, "But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand."

Jonathan originally had 2,000 pages of notes before he condensed those pages into his book. I suspect he felt somewhat like John the Revelator, stunned at seeing an unfolding drama of biblical proportion.

I am including thoughts here that include criticisms I hear and positive observations. You decide.

**Criticisms often heard when discussing *The Harbinger***

[The Bible has all the warnings we need.](#) The perils of the Tribulation are



outlined in the Bible. They are stunning and easy to understand. We do not need Christian books to complement the Bible. (Comment: True, but many secularists and Christians not into the end-times scoff at the last days' issues and warnings in the Bible. Yet this may be the strongest argument.)

God's primary means of reaching and engaging the world is not through a nation or state -- it's through His Church. America is not His chosen means to spread His salvation and love to the world. The church is. Thus, America has no special calling whatsoever. (Comment: If America has a calling, it is to evangelize the world and be a power-broker friend of Israel. The latter is dwindling thanks to the current administration.)

Cahn should not be comparing Israel to America for Israel is "chosen" and America, at best, has been "favored." As a result, there are simply no appropriate parallels and his conclusion is bogus. America is not the hope of the world. God is. America has not become God's "chosen people." (Comment: I don't hear Jonathan Cahn saying any of this.)

All empires rise and fall. We could fit the *The Harbinger* script into events leading to the fall of the Roman Empire, the British Empire, etc. America is not in end-time prophecy. We obviously lose our influence. Why are we trying to save a sinking ship? At best we're engaged in a rescue mission -- to rescue souls.

Were the founding fathers really all that spiritual? Is America's "sacred" beginning blown out of proportion in the book? Most were Masons including George Washington who plays a prominent role in Cahn's conclusions. The history books are divided on this issue. (Comment: There are dark forces, then and now. But the voices insisting our founding fathers had little to no spiritual depth are nonsense. *Some of them did.* Many were clearly secular. Masonry did abound at the time.)

Cahn's characters in the book seem to have a mystical side with the use of dreams playing a major role. A primary character is a "prophet." Many find these issues too troubling and write the book off. (Comment: Be careful to not throw the baby out with the bath water in case this is a message for today.)

II Chronicles 7:14 is for Israel, as they were truly "His people." We need to be very careful applying the passage to America or any other nation. Some have

written off *The Harbinger* primarily for this reason. But others say that the template of ancient Israel is always in play. Every pastor in America consistently makes application to ancient Israel. Jonathan insists Israel is Israel and Israel is "His people." He believes America needs to learn from this even though America is not a "chosen nation" as Israel is chosen.

#### **Reasons to Carefully Reflect on *The Harbinger* Message:**

Sodom and Gomorrah would have been spared if even 10 righteous could be found. God's message is always, "If you will repent, I will restore favor upon you." Is the message of repentance ever out of line? Can we not learn from the mistakes of history? Isn't every line of the Bible for our benefit and can we not learn from all the mistakes made in the Bible by Jew or Gentile (Rom. 15:4)? Cahn's basic premise is on target: Israel blew it big time; America, you're right behind them.

Jonathan Cahn is a Jewish believer. The accusations that he represents "Replacement Theology" are ludicrous. He doesn't want to disinherit his own people. Additionally, he rejects this specific accusation and never even alludes to this false doctrine. He is not making America equal to Israel or placing a higher calling on America.

The American dream is looking like a national nightmare. Things cannot continue as they are. America is taxing and spending herself into oblivion thanks to our reckless leaders who are motivated only by corruption and greed. We are looking like a Romans 1 nation with pride, ego, money, lust, and self the only motivators. America is being seized by "spread-the-wealth" Socialists and Marxists at the highest levels of government. *We are becoming unrecognizable. This scenario will only get worse unless America's Christians get serious.*

To the surprise of many, politics or a new administration will not "save" America. Conservatism won't save America. A more Bible-friendly administration would help the cause of the country, but no political leader will make God the focus of government, education, public policy, and the market place. Cahn is saying, "we the people" can, through prayer and repentance. He is realistic enough to say it may be too late.

#### **Conclusion:**

Christians are called to preach the gospel and win the lost before we save a nation. But watchmen on the wall

warn! I am doing that all the time. I am not a prophet -- I just don't want blood on my hands. I sense the church is too riddled with apostasy and too busy majoring in minors to bring about national repentance and I hope I am wrong. But God calls none to be successful, just to be faithful.

There are consequences for individuals and nations who thumb their nose at God! We can't get away with that forever. Can you really look at the events of 9/11 and not comprehend that that was *a nod from God to wake us up* as a people and a nation? The northern kingdom of Israel had their hedge of protection destroyed with a limited strike, as did America.

God's desire is always that people turn back to Him. And He's the God of second and third chances, even 50 chances. He is infinitely patient and long-suffering. He almost never gives up. But eventually, the northern kingdom of Israel was dispersed to the four corners of the earth. And finally the rain began during Noah's time. Now there is thunder in the distance again.

I'm one who considers Heaven to be my real home. I want very little to do with anything earthly. But one cannot dismiss the parallels between ancient Israel and America! They are stunning and they're not generalities. They're specific as outlined in Cahn's book and Joseph Farah's film. At the very least, you will be reminded that there are consequences when an individual or nation turns their back on God.

What if this is America's final warning? If you're convinced it is, you can blow the trumpet of warning as well. If you disagree, your investment is minimal. I don't think believers can be casual or indifferent to the demise of America even if our longing for our eternal Home is greater than our love for this one.

America is not a shining city on a hill as Ronald Reagan used to say. Heaven is that city. But I don't want to be so Heavenly-minded that I am absolutely no earthly good for whatever weeks, months, or years I have left in America the beautiful.

It would seem the parallels found by Jonathan Cahn in his book, and portrayed brilliantly by Joseph Farah in the film, defy "coincidence." Using his understanding of Jewish culture and Biblical tradition, Cahn makes a convincing case.

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