
When God Departs

By David Wilkerson

November 18, 1991 I have often heard people say, "God will never depart from America. There are too many praying Christians in this country. Our victory in the war with Iraq is proof God is still with us. We're a Christian nation, the apple of God's eye! World missions depend on us. We've always been a great nation, and the Lord will bless us as long as we exist."

Yet this is just what Israel said at the height of their apostasy! All their false prophets proclaimed, "God will never depart from His chosen land - He loves Jerusalem too much. He cannot leave us because of His covenant. Besides, the temple is in Jerusalem and that is where Jehovah abides. The world depends on the Light, and the Light is in Israel. We're safe, secure - nothing can happen to us!"

Then along came the prophet Hosea, crying out in behalf of the Lord, "Woe also to them when I depart from them!" (Hosea 9:12). "For the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more" (verse 15).

This woeful prophecy from Hosea seemed ridiculous to his fellow citizens. They said to him, "Prophet, you'd better take another look around. You say judgment is at the door. But, tell us - where is the evidence that God is about to depart from us? Our nation is not collapsing. We're still prospering, we're still a mighty nation. Our military is still strong

There are no enemies at our gates. We have problems, little pockets of trouble. But we've survived every other crisis, and we'll survive these. There is no sign that God is leaving us!"

Hosea answered the skeptics, "It's true that up to now it has been pleasant for you." "Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place" (Hosea 9:18). Ephraim refers to those ten tribes who were not of Judah.) Hosea was saying, "You have been prosperous like Tyre, that great city built upon a rock, surrounded by water and near-impregnable. You've been trading with the merchants of the world and have become one of the richest, most prosperous societies in history. Yes, in every outward appearance you're like Tyre.

"But there is something you don't see! Even now, at the height of your military and financial might, there are signs all around you that God is departing! You attribute all your troubles to fate, saying these pockets of crises are happenstance, and they'll pass away. But you're missing what God is trying to say: These signs are in your midst because God is leaving you! You say you won't have to suffer as other nations have - but you are blind! Things are spinning out of control because your day of reckoning has come!"

"The Days of Visitation Are Come, The Days of Recompense Are Come" (Hosea 9:7) Hosea could hardly believe the blindness of God's people. They saw nothing but good times ahead. They believed they could pull themselves out of any difficult trial. But everywhere he turned the prophet saw powerful signs of God's displeasure - and departure! He couldn't understand why the people of God weren't awakened, why no one was being stirred.

"The days of visitation are come...Israel shall know it" (verse 7). Hosea was saying, "Up to now, you haven't known you were under judgment. But God says, 'I'm going to move with great judgment so suddenly and quickly that you will know I am behind them all!'

In the same way today, the judgments of God will fall on America so swiftly and mightily that there

will be no mistaking they are from God. Every prophet who's been preaching peace and prosperity and lulling a sinful nation to sleep will soon be exposed This nation will know that the time has come to pay up! It will be payday for mocking God out of our schools and government...for murdering millions of babies...for making Jesus Christ the object of blasphemy... for murder, lust, run-away crime, violence and pornography!

Right now, few believe America's troubles are God-sent. But just wait - we'll soon be in the same place as Israel: the day of recompense! What makes us think God would judge every past society when they reached this stage - and yet somehow we, who are more wicked than all of them, will escape? Why do we think that because we're Americans, we won't suffer like other nations? Do we really believe our nation can continue growing more evil, violent and godless, and never have to give an account?

What will be the last slap in God's face? What will make Him say, "Enough!" Hasn't it been enough that we've passed laws banning Him from our society; that we now clamor for atheism and humanism; that we've murdered 25 to 30 million babies? Which national affront, which mockery, which shaking of our fist at God will be the last straw?

I believe that day has already happened in America that He's already had the last slap in His face - and heaven can take no more!

But, as I said before, we have prophets in our land today who tell us God has promised never to depart from us. At conferences all over America you can hear well known men say, "Don't listen to Mr. Wilkerson and those other doomsday prophets. Instead, turn to Isaiah 54 and listen to the good word for America!" Then they will quote you this passage:

"Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame.... For thy Maker is thine husband.... For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer..."

This is the verse they'll use to guarantee that America cannot come under judgment: "For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.... My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:4-10).

This promise is indeed wonderful! But what these modern-day prophets fail to tell you is that the promise is meant only for those who are taught of the Lord, who are established in righteousness - according to the same chapter in Isaiah! The promise is not for America - it's for overcomers: "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

The Lord will never leave and forsake His beloved; His mercy will never depart from those who cling to Him. But these prophecies have nothing at all to do with God sparing sin-laden America. Rather, the woes of Hosea are directed to a nation "gone a-whoring" from their God! I ask you - has America become a harlot nation? Yes because we have gone down the same road of apostasy that Israel did!

Hosea gives us four signs God showed to Israel to reveal to them He was departing:

Sign Number One: The People Give Themselves Over to Filth and Shame."They have deeply corrupted themselves..., and separated themselves unto that shame.. and their abominations were as according

as they loved" (Hosea 9:9-10). Sexual perversions - shameful abominations had spread throughout Israel, corrupting even the once-righteous. They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah" (verse 9).

Who can forget what happened at Gibeah? This was the small city of Benjamin where lust-mad bisexuals gang-raped the concubine of a visiting Levite - because they couldn't have the priest himself! They raped her all night long and left her to die on the doorstep.

When the rest of Israel found out about the horror, they came against Benjamin. Israel told them, "Just deliver the homosexuals to us. We'll deal with the men who spent the night raping this concubine. There has to be a cleansing. Our nation cannot let this go - it's too much!"

But Gibeah was entrenched in their sin, and sat secure - because they knew their society would back them up. And they were right! A whole nation of Benjamites rose up and said, "'No, they have a right to be what they are.'" So Israel came against them in battle, and 25,000 strong Benjamites and 100 Gibeonites died. They died not for justice - but for Gibeah's right to sexual perversion!

Can you imagine a society so deeply corrupted it would send men to die for the right to practice sexual indulgence, to the point of public rape? Over 25,000 men died to protect Gibeah's homosexual rights!

Hosea is saying to us today, "Woe to you! God is departing because you have become as deeply corrupted by sexual lust as those in Gibeah." This is the major corruption of America today - we have become a modern Gibeah! And therefore God says He will visit our sins!

I'm going to be very brave in talking about something God has laid on my heart. I want to talk to you about the deviant sexual practices of America. I don't mean those of homosexuals in San Francisco or in Greenwich Village. I don't mean the lurid sex murders of Jeffrey Dahmer, who killed and cannibalized some of his homosexual partners. No, these sinners aren't the ones who break God's heart the most; these have always been given over to their sins.

God's heart is grieved over something more evil than that:

He is grieved over the sudden moral breakdown of those who call themselves Christians! In millions of Christian homes, so-called normal, godly people sit before cable TV or a VCR and drink in filthy, shameful, R- and X-rated movies!

I believe I'm speaking to literally hundreds of thousands of Christians. And the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart that I may be the only voice that warns you of the danger you face. God told me I had to take this stand, before it's too late for many!

TV networks and cable companies now compete to bring the vilest, most perverted movies into America's homes. And untold numbers of "believing Christians" now secretly view this filth! They have bought the lie of psychologists who say "mature Christians" are not affected by watching porn. Christian couples are being told, "Pornography can't hurt married adults. In fact, it will enhance your marriage. It will bring a new excitement." Some even say these movies serve as a valve to let off sexual energy that otherwise would cause a spouse to turn to someone outside the marriage. This lie is being bought even by ministers of the gospel!

Every night and day in this nation, Christians who once would not even think such things now indulge in all kinds of kinkiness - sadism, pain games, wild experimentation. They excuse it by misquoting the Scripture, "The marriage bed is undefiled." They twist it to mean, "Anything goes between married people!"

Dear saint, that's a lie from hell! Pornography is not innocent - it is dangerous and destructive! It opens your home to every kind of demonic attack!

One Pentecostal minister's wife watched in horror as pornographic lust destroyed her husband's anointing and changed him into a man she didn't know. He started bringing porno movies home and sitting for hours in his study, drinking in one filthy film after another. Soon he turned into a porno addict. All his relationships began to sour. His wife could see the demonic influences entering his heart.

Eventually, he insisted that she watch with him - and that they introduce those same sexual acts into their marriage. He said if she didn't comply, he'd leave her.

She didn't want her marriage to fail - so she watched the movies with him. She told me "Mr. Wilkerson, at first I was ashamed. But within two or three weeks, an attraction was building in my heart. It was laying hold of me.

"I was watching one time, and suddenly I realized we had opened ourselves to demon possession. We were trying to reenact those very scenes in our lives, and hell was coming into our hearts! I knew that the people who perform in those movies are the children of the devil - and we were doing the same things! I ran out and fell on my knees and repented and God changed me. I told my husband I couldn't do it anymore!"

Her husband left her. He resigned from the ministry and gave himself over to despair. He went downward physically and spiritually, and within a year he was completely different man.

But his wife wouldn't give up on him. She prayed for him - and her prayers prevailed. God set the man free! Today they are both completely restored. He's planning to go back into the ministry, and his anointing has returned. A good man has been restored, and the whole house has been cleansed.

This family can tell you some thing of the hellish stronghold pornography can have on a Christian home. They can tell you that teenagers are going to hell, because their parents have corrupted their own minds! Mom and Dad wake up in the morning, their mind replaying scenes of lust... they sit at the dinner table thinking of it, they go to bed with their minds on it... and right now as I write this, in Christian homes all across America, filthy scenes are being played, replayed and reenacted that are right out of hell!

I believe I am speaking as an oracle of God to many people. This shame has invaded your life and home, and you may be blinded to its power. If it has taken hold of you, it will destroy you - and God will depart from you! When people who were once "separated unto God" become so deeply corrupted they become "devoted to shameful lust," God must depart He must call for a day of recompense! God would not tolerate this deep corruption in Israel, and HE won't tolerate it today. May you cry out to Him for deliverance!

If you're reading this and you are involved with pornography in any way, run to God - right now fall on

your knees, dear brother, sister or pastor - because the devil has your heart and the Holy Spirit has departed from you!

Up to this point, the Holy Spirit has been the "Restrainer" in our society. He has delayed His judgment, because we've been a praying people. But when God departs His favor and restraining power leave as well.

Can you imagine how totally given over to sin America will become when God leaves us? If we remain so sin-possessed now while He is near, pleading with us to forsake our sin, what will it be like when He leaves? What will happen when the Restrainer is gone? How many Christians will be overcomers then?

Sign Number Two: There Will Be Tumults And Uprisings Among The People (Hosea 10:14). "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity.... Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled" (Hosea 10:13-14).

A tumult is an uprising in the land - a noisy, disorderly riot. It also means, "inciting people to riot and disorder." Tumults best describe what is happening in Russia, Yugoslavia, Ireland, South America and Albania. God has sent tumults to arouse the masses! Why are all these tumults among the nations taking place? "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies... - Therefore shall a tumult arise" (Hosea 10:13-14).

God did not need our high-tech bombers or military might to bring down the Soviet Union. All He needed was a few tumults within their own borders. And now it is America's turn! We are going to see tumults rising up all over the land. Can you already see the signs of emerging race and economic riots?

When a nation walks in the fear of God and does right before Him, God brings a quiet within its borders. David said, "(God) being girded with power... stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people" (Psalm 65:6-7).

But when God departs and He lifts His hand, all hell breaks loose. Soon, America's enemy will not be Russia, China or nuclear weapons - but violence within our gates! The next thing on America's calendar will be uprisings among the people. It will be Jew against black, black against Korean American, against Japanese, white against black.

I'm not speaking of some vision I've seen. I'm simply preaching what Scripture clearly teaches in Hosea. And it says: "Tumults are going to rise among your people!" And that's a sign that God has lifted His hand, that He is departing the nation!

Jeremiah confirms that tumults are a sign of God's wrath and withdrawal. He told backslidden Israel: "For the Lord of hosts, that planted thee.. .hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel... which they have done against themselves .with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it" (Jeremiah 11:16-17).

Zechariah brings out the very same prophecy. God will keep His people safe in Him, but those who are anti-God will endure the following: "And it shall come to pass in that day [meaning, our time] that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor" (Zechariah 14:13).

God is saying, "As My judgment comes upon you, neighbor shall lay hand upon neighbor." After listening to the news of the past six months, does that sound familiar to you? You can forget the terrible Watts riots of the sixties. They were nothing compared to what we soon will face.

Beloved, God can remove His hand at any moment! The stage is now set in America for riots and tumults beyond anything this nation has ever experienced. We shake our heads in wonder at what is happening to Russia, with all its inner turmoil. But soon Russia and the world will shake their heads in disbelief as racial and economic tumults sweep across America!

Sign Number Three: Your Children Will Be Given Over to the Murderers! (Hosea 9:13). "Ephraim, as I saw Tyus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer" (Hosea 9:18).

This is a shocking prophecy. In the same verse that Hosea acknowledges Israel's prosperity, he also says their children will be brought forth to murderers!

Today, not only are our children being murdered, but their parents are becoming their murderers. They are tormenting, abusing and killing their own children. Listen to this story from the New York Daily News:

"A Bronx couple were arrested on attempted murder and child abuse charges yesterday after police said they found their 8-year-old daughter cowering in a closet, covered with bruises, scars and burns after years of torture. The child allegedly had been handcuffed to a bathtub railing and burned as punishment for trying to hide bits of food to eat. 'She had extensive injuries over 95 percent of her body - she looked like walking death,' said Detective Scott Wagner....

"The officers found the girl in a closet, where her 71-year-old grandmother, Edith Carter, had hidden her before admitting the cops.... 'They said it was the worst case of abuse they had ever seen on a child who lived,' said Detective Sgt. John Ruiz.

"Edith Carter said that her granddaughter had not gone to school for two years. She said her daughter had beaten the child over the past five years.... The weapons, Ruiz said, were the paddle used to beat the girl and handcuffs, belts and straps used to shackle her in the bathroom and closet....

"Carter said that at times, punishment for stealing food would be to place the child's hands over a lit stove. Other times, she said, the punishment would be to handcuff the girl to a handrail in the bathroom. 'She would sometimes fall asleep in the tub because she was tired from standing up,' Carter said."

I ask you - is what happened in Gibeah any worse than this? Mothers and fathers are being exposed by celebrities who say, "I was raped in childhood by my mother." Who can believe it? Yet before we moved our ministry to New York, our hearts were broken over all the incest we had to deal with in the hills of East Texas. My daughter found a precious two-year-old girl who every uncle, grandfather and man in the neighborhood had raped. She was so bruised up, I couldn't handle it! We brought down the fury of the law on those parents.

Ghetto children are being destroyed before our eyes by drugs, alcohol, demon-possessed pushers and gangs. There are housing developments in every major city now where nearly all teenagers carry

guns, knives and other weapons to protect themselves. There is hardly an apartment in these buildings that has not lost a child or relative. These children are being killed - or else they become the murderers!

Two boys robbed a Dallas shoe store recently, leaving with an armload of sneakers. They just had to have the special sneakers that this greedy nation has said they must have (for over \$100 a pair!). A bystander tried to stop them by pulling the keys out of the boys' car - and one of the boys pulled out a gun and shot the man in cold blood. The killer was four-teen years old.

I ask you - what will become of our nation when God lifts His hand completely? We're singing, "God bless America," while judgment knocks at the door. And we don't want to hear it! You may put down this message, flop down in front of a TV and forget every word I've said. But I urge you, if you can't get rid of it, at least control your television habit - because TV has caused the very things I'm talking about!

Moses warned of the grave consequences of God's curse upon nations that forsake Him: "Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body" (Deuteronomy 28:18). Isaiah warned that God will "punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity.... Every one that is found shall be thrust through.... Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes" (Isaiah 18:11, 15-16). I tell you, our children are being dashed to pieces on the news, in the newspapers - before our very eyes!

There is one more sign that God gives us - and it is one that involves every true believer. Thank God, it gives us hope:

Sign Number Four: In the Midst of Turmoil, God Will Have a People Seeking Him for an Outpouring Of Righteousness! (Hosea 10:12). Here's the sign: that in the middle of all this chaos, God will have a people who are becoming more holy, more pure and more righteous. They will call on His name, and He will rain down His righteousness upon them.

I think this is one of the most beautiful verses in all of Hosea: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; breakup your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12). Yes, God is visiting us today with His judgment and His wrath. But today is also the day to seek God for a great outpouring of His righteousness!

Hosea was echoing God's heart-cry. The Lord cries out to everyone who still seeks after Him: "Yes, there is shame, there is backsliding on all sides. Indeed, it is an evil time. But if you will seek Me in this day of visitation, I'll pour out upon you My beautiful holiness. In the midst of shame I desire a people yearning for purity. And I will pour it out upon you if you will seek Me."

In Hosea's time, this cry fell on deaf ears. There is no evidence that even a remnant heeded the prophet's call. There was no rain of righteousness, because nobody stood in the gap and said, "I will seek the Lord in these shameful days!"

But God has a holy remnant in America today! And He says, "You are to seek Me until I come and rain righteousness down upon you. It won't be just a few drops - I'm going to flood you!"

The word "rain," as used here in Hebrew, is "a pinpointed rain, directed as an arrow." God will shoot His arrow of righteousness down to create a hunger and thirst in us. And it will fall upon those who are turning to the Lord with seeking hearts.

This "pinpointed rain" also means that it's not going to hit everybody. No, it's not going to fall on the whole church. If you're thinking of a national or international revival of the whole church world, you can forget about it. God's rain will be a spotted rain. It will fall wherever God finds a people who truly hunger and thirst after Jesus... who are sick and tired of their sin... who rise up and say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. We will seek Him - there will be no devil in this house!"

Beloved, the outpouring of righteousness we seek is not one of signs and wonders. Thank God the Red Sea opened and Israel went through on dry ground - but that didn't impress Israel. They soon forgot and backslid in spite of it all. Thank God the walls of Jericho fell - but afterward Israel fell into corruption right away. Thank God Lazarus was raised from the dead - but soon the Jews sought to kill him and Jesus!

Miracles and wonders have never had a lasting impression. The only thing that will impress a wicked society is a rain of righteousness and a revival of holiness among God's people.

You see, a people who walk clean and pure in a wicked generation stand out as lights. They beam in the darkness, full of Jesus, holy, righteous and pure. They are untouched, unmarked. "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zechariah 10:1).

God came to Amos and said, "Tell the people I'm tired of their silly festivals and their flag-waving. I'm sick of their solemn assemblies. I'm now seeking a people who will look to me for an outpouring of righteousness." "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (see Amos 5:21-24). The mighty stream of God's righteousness is going to run through narrow channels - only through those who yearn for Him! As I sought the Lord for this message, I trembled with the fear of God. I prayed, "Lord, show me the real secret behind those who live holy, godly lives. What makes them able to overcome their lust and sin and walk righteously with You, year after year? What is it that, while the world is going to hell, makes them shine brighter and brighter?"

The answer: Holy men and women who walk in righteousness all share the same awesome fear of God. They have more than a vision of His grace and love. They know a dread of His utter holiness - that no evil shall endure His presence!

"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence.... The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares~of death" (Proverbs 16:26-27). "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil" (Proverbs 16:6). "It shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days... because he feareth not before God" (Ecclesiastes 8:18). "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isaiah 8:18).

Those who continue blindly in their sin have been hardened from the fear of God. Isaiah asked, "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" (Isaiah 63:17). God answered, "Because you so loved your sin, I gave you over to it. You didn't want to be delivered, you didn't want My fear. So I closed your heart to it."

Jeremiah said, "You sin because the fear of God is not in you!" "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 2:19). The prophet is saying, "Your sin is a terrible, bitter thing - and it's going to destroy you, because My fear is not in your heart."

Dear saint, I pray that God puts His dread and fear in your heart. God means His Word! He once told Moses, one of the meekest men in the world, "Since you've sinned against Me before the people, you will not enter the Promised Land." (Thank God, He took that meek man into the true Canaan!). If the Lord did that with a holy Moses, what will He do with us on the earth at this time? He's saying an absolute "No!" to your sin and lust!

If you are guilty of anything that has to do with adultery, fornication or a secret affair, God is saying to you, "My judgment is coming. And I'm going to have a people that are righteous and pure. Seek Me, and I will rain down My righteousness on you. I'll cleanse you. Just call on Me and seek Me with all your heart, and I'll pour out My rain on you." Before His final judgments fall, God wants to bathe you in His precious blood and His Word.