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## **Are You Ready for the Coming Storm?**

**By David Wilkerson**

March 4, 1996 Isaiah prophesies that God will one day rise up and shake the whole earth. The prophet writes: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty... and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof... all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.... When thus it shall be in the midst of the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree..." (Isaiah 24:1, 11, 13). God is going to shake the earth as if it were an olive tree - till every bit of fruit falls!

"...for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake... the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro...and shall be removed like a cottage..." (verses 18-20). The entire earth shall appear to be a mere cottage when God begins His shaking!

Other prophets concur with Isaiah's word:

\* Ezekiel says that when God's fury arises, He will shake terribly all that can be shaken: "...all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground....and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel 38:20-23).

\* Joel says: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of (His) children..." (Joel 3:16).

\* Haggai writes: "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations..." (Haggai 2:6-7).

\* The writer of Hebrews says: "...Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven... that [only] those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:26-27).

God is going to shake everything in sight - so that He alone is revealed as the only unshakeable power!

We Have Seen the Beginnings of God's Shaking in the Past Few Years!

The Lord literally began to shake the earth with earthquakes in the late 1980s. A quake in Armenia wiped out almost that whole province. A quake in Japan measuring 6.9 nearly destroyed an entire city. Then came the horrible quake in San Francisco - and others followed almost daily in that area. Quakes hit the west coast constantly, from northern California to San Diego and down into Mexico. At one point, a New York newspaper headline asked, "Is God Trying to Quake Us Up?"

Let me ask you something: What does a loving parent do when a child is sleeping but must wake up? That parent takes his child gently by the shoulders and shakes him. If the child doesn't wake up immediately, the shaking then becomes a bit more firm and serious - because the parent knows the child will suffer if he doesn't wake up.

That's just what God is doing right now - both to America and to the world! At first, He shook us very tenderly. But now His shaking has become violent - because He has still not succeeded in waking us

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up!

The prophets I mentioned weren't just speaking into the wind. When the Lord says, "I'm going to shake the earth one more time," He means it! He will literally shake our economy, our education system, our government - everything we put our trust and confidence in, everything that seems safe and secure.

Could you ever have imagined the greatest nation on earth closed down because of bipartisan politics flirting with national bankruptcy, threatening payments of our international debts?

I have had a very vivid, recurring dream about the President of the United States - which President, I don't know. In the dream he is looking out the window of the Oval Office, shaking his head in disbelief and saying, "How did it happen? What went wrong?" None of his solemn Cabinet members or aides could explain America's collapse to him.

And that's just the way it will be when God does His shaking: No one will be able to explain it! I think of the stock market crash eight years ago. Overnight it went down 500 points - and there was no reason for it. Indeed, things will be going along nicely when suddenly a quake will hit - not a physical quake, but an unexpected economic quake. God will shake our very foundations!

The Bible also warns us that, simultaneous to God's shaking, a great demonic flood is descending upon humankind. The devil is about to bring a fierce downpour of filth, wickedness and testings beyond anything our minds can conjure. He knows his time is short - and he is preparing to unleash overwhelming winds and waves of evil!

For example: Many people now own a computer. What better way could Satan invade people's homes than with a demonic flood through the information superhighway? This superhighway could become a direct line to hell. It's already a purveyor of pornography. I realize this great information development can be used to produce many wonderful services. But it has the potential to become a powerful tool of Satan!

In fact, it may be the very tool the Antichrist uses to usher in his kingdom and power. For example, it might become the source of a cashless society. Already, Chase Manhattan Bank has instituted computer banking in New York, with no paperwork involved at all - only numbers.

I believe the flood of evil is now reaching critical mass, where everything has begun to spin out of control. And, tragically, we don't know it - because we have become inured to it! Things that once bothered us now have become commonplace. We've seen and heard so much evil that nothing moves us anymore.

I wonder: When the storm comes - when everything begins to spin out of control - how many Christians will be able to stand? How many will have the foundation of faith necessary to endure that time?

I believe that is the Lord's great concern for His people at this moment. And it is my great concern as a shepherd: "Lord, how many of Your people will fall when the storm strikes with full fury? How many will stand unmoveable? And how can I prepare them for the great shaking?"

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Jesus Has Given Us What I Call the "Parable of Preparedness"!

During my time of prayer, the Lord gave me a revelation of Jesus' parable of the builders, found in Matthew 7. I believe this parable contains an incredible truth for us in these last days. Yet only diligent seekers will discover it!

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Jesus is saying that the only thing that will hold up in the coming storm is to be established on a rock foundation. One man built his house upon a rock, "...and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (verse 25).

Now, the builders of these houses represent two classes of Christians in these last days - the wise and the foolish. They built two different kinds of houses and people were already living in both kinds when the storm hit.

On one hand, it is encouraging to know there will be a body of believers who will not fall. They will be able to withstand every demonic onslaught that comes out of hell. Nothing will be able to move them when the storms rage. That's what Jesus wants us to know from this parable: A person who builds his house upon a rock will survive everything that's coming!

Yet, sadly, there will be another group of Christians - people of whom Jesus says, "Their fall will be great!" "...and great was the fall of it" (verse 27). This means a total, complete, devastating collapse of everything.

At this point, you may be wondering: "What does it mean, exactly, to 'build a house'?" It is important to know what Jesus is referring to here - because He says the house each of us is building will face a devastating flood.

The House We Are Building Is About Loving Obedience to Christ!

The house Jesus is talking about here is our walk with Him. We are building a foundation of getting to know Christ, of understanding His ways. We are building into our faith certain characteristics that will determine how we react under pressure.

Many Christians may say, "I'm a believer. I've built on the rock." Yet they don't truly understand what this phrase means. And they will have a great shock and surprise when their relationship with Jesus does not endure the storm. They will be exposed as having no foundation!

We can't understand what this parable is talking about unless we understand this: This parable is about obedience! Jesus is speaking of a person who hears His Word and does it - who obeys Him, who acts upon His commands. He is describing a lifestyle - a walk of total, absolute obedience to His

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Word. That is to be our foundation!

Of course, Jesus Himself is our Rock. But that is not the full meaning of "rock" as used by Him in this parable. Some who claim they have built on Christ as their rock may not be building properly. It is because this rock is a condition of the heart! It represents the foundational motives from which our obedience to God originates.

Just as Water Sprang and Flowed Out of the Rock in the Wilderness, This Rock Also Has a Spring and a Flow!

There is a flow of obedience in our lives - a flow that springs from the motives of the heart. It is important to understand the motive out of which our obedience springs - because if the spring is not pure, everything that flows out of it will be polluted.

There is a kind of obedience that actually makes God weep. This is when people do His Word with reluctance! It is a legal obedience - a cold, technical formality, based on fear of consequences.

Consider the father who needs to correct his teenage daughter. He tells her, "I can see in your boyfriend's eyes he's using drugs! I don't want you ever to see him again. And I don't want you coming in at one or two o'clock in the morning anymore. If you do, I'll put you out of the house!"

The next night, the girl comes home at ten minutes before twelve. She hasn't been with her boyfriend - but he is still in her heart! Now she's in her room, pouting. She has been obedient to her father - but only because she's afraid she'll be kicked out.

This is the obedience of a disgruntled child! Her heart is not in her actions. She's obedient only because she fears her father's wrath. She does not obey him out of pleasure or because she loves him. On the contrary - she's angry at him for restricting her freedom and limiting her lifestyle.

The sad truth is, many Christians in these last days obey God only because they are afraid to go to hell. They fear their Father's wrath! Their obedience to Him is "legal" only. They have no genuine desire to please Him!

Yet, Jesus did everything out of pleasure for His heavenly Father: "...I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:28-29).

This was the rock, the foundation, upon which Jesus built a life of obedience! It was the spring, the motive, out of which the flow of His obedience came.

And it is to be our rock also. It must be the foundational motive of all our obedience: "I do it because I want to please my Lord - to bring Him great pleasure!"

Jesus' desire was to do His Father's pleasure! He shut Himself up in prayer on the mountaintops, in quiet places, often all night long. And His one great prayer was, "Father, what do You want? What will bring You pleasure? What can I do to fulfill the desire of Your heart?"

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And that is the attitude of a person who has the Spirit of Christ - one who builds on the rock!

The Person Who Builds His House on the Rock Is Not Held by Some Kind of Legal Obligation.

The law isn't intended for the person whose obedience springs out of a desire to please God. He is not concerned about what is legal or illegal, what is permitted or forbidden. He has only one criterion: "What does my Lord desire?"

You can lay out all the law before him - all the rules, regulations and prohibitions - and he will say, "You don't have to tell me not to do those things. I wouldn't do anything to hurt my Father. I love Him! I've already forsaken the world and its lusts to go after Him whom my heart desires.

"Show me what He wants, not just what He forbids. I want His heart's desire to become my actions. I want to know His mind, and to obey it. Sure, I love His law. But that's for the lawless - for those who haven't come into a knowledge of intimacy with Christ. I have another law at work in my heart. It's the law of love - one that says, 'Lord, what can I do to please You today?'"

Such a Christian lives a very straight life. Others often accuse him, saying, "You don't even do things that are allowed. You're in bondage to legalism. You seem so different!"

This person looks at them dumbfounded and says, "What do you mean, bondage? I have great freedom because I love Him. I don't do any of the things you're talking about because I have everything in the Lord. My source of happiness is pleasing Him!"

Such a person isn't moved by threats of hellfire, or even by rewards. He needs no prophet to shake him, no warnings of judgment. He is in love with Jesus - and his obedience to God's Word is a natural outgrowth of his love. It is as natural to him as breathing!

On the other hand, the person who builds his house on sand does so only for show. It is a temporary lifestyle. He reasons he'll live in that house for five years, then sell it and leave the problems to someone else. It's only a facade - with no real foundation!

You see, this person doesn't believe a storm is coming. He doesn't want to think that things are going to get hard. Yet that is the way the world deals with eternity: They simply don't think about it! A Christian celebrity once asked Johnny Carson, "What do you think about eternity?" He answered, "I try to put it out of my mind."

Tragically, a lot of Christians try to put eternity out of their minds. They try not to think that judgment is at the door. They don't want to believe that one day they'll stand before the Lord and answer for everything they've said and done.

I had a horrible, vivid dream about hell recently. I was on one side of a veil that was impassable. Yet I saw people on the other side walking around, moving - but going nowhere! They were paired up (not in marriage) with someone who represented the one thing or person they desired most here on earth. They had gotten the very thing they'd thought they wanted - but now it brought such terror and torment to their soul, they were weeping and gnashing their teeth. It was a never-ending source of torment!

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The thing that frightened me most was, I saw some people I knew - some whom I thought had been holy. I shouted to them, "Let me pray you out!" But they looked at me and answered, "You can't." Then they turned and walked away. I tried to go after them, but an invisible wall came down between us.

I woke up in bed, trembling and crying out, "Oh, God! If that's what hell is like, let me never fail to warn the people. Keep me awake! Every time I stand in the pulpit, let it be a life-and-death matter, with no coddling, no jokes. There's a hell - and it's real!" I will never forget the utter hopelessness I felt in hearing the damned say, "You can't help me."

Yes, there is a righteous fear of God. And we need to fear hell and the wrath of God! Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." (2 Corinthians 5:11).

### Those Who Build on Sand Have Never Truly Known Christ!

Jesus describes this person in Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

I call these people "In the name of Jesus" people. They're going to stand before God's throne and say, "Lord, in Your name we cast out devils, we healed the sick, we did many wonderful works for You!" But the tragic truth is, they built their houses upon sand.

These people did not have a divided heart. On the contrary - their heart was never the Lord's! It couldn't be divided - because it was never given to Him in the first place. They didn't backslide or turn back - because they didn't know Jesus from the beginning!

Many great works have been done by those who have never been intimate with Christ. They cried, "Lord, Lord!" throughout their lives - coming to Him for relief, for power, for rewards. But they never stopped long enough in His presence to get to know Him! I can think of entire ministries and churches about which this is true. They use His name without knowing Him!

They are busy for Him - but they don't obey Him with a love that flows from enraptured hearts. They simply haven't taken the time to know His heart and what pleases Him. Jesus says such people work iniquity - because they use His name without ever becoming intimate with Him! And He will tell them, "You say you did all these things for Me. But you built your house upon sand - because you never knew Me. You were never obedient to Me!"

If you say you're a Christian - that you love Jesus, that your house is built upon a rock, that you walk in obedience to the Lord - yet you neglect Him day after day in prayer, then you don't know Him! Your house is not on the rock. It's on sand - and it's going to collapse completely in hard times!

You can't get to know Jesus by going to church alone. You've got to have a day-by-day, hour-by-hour conversation with the Lord. You've got to get to know Him, to grow to love Him, to desire to know what pleases Him!

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We make the Lord's commandments out to be something burdensome, impossible, restricting, damaging to our personal freedom. And, rather than embracing His words to us, we look for ways to escape doing them.

We distort God's grace in this way - making it out to be some kind of tunnel out of the prison of His law. But grace is actually a teacher of holiness: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:2-3).

The man on the rock embraces and joyfully fulfills the Lord's commands. He doesn't see God as someone with a belt in his hand, always ready to chastise him. No - he sees the Lord as One with arms outstretched to him, saying, "Come to me and receive life, receive strength. I'll carry you through!"

God's Word Clearly Shows Us What It Takes to Build Upon the Rock!

\* Enoch obeyed God with the sole objective of pleasing Him! "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5). Enoch was translated because he pleased the Lord!

\* The apostle John says: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22). "...for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

\* Paul writes: "...even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thessalonians 2:4). "...(fulfilling) all the good pleasure of his goodness..." (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

Dear saint, you are not building on the rock if you need a preacher to thunder at you to obey God - if you need a set of do's and don'ts, if you need to be constantly convicted and reminded of His Word. No - you don't need a rule book! You need a passionate love for Jesus. You need to be so in love with Him that you know what pleases Him. Knowing His desires should become second nature to you!

The more you love Him, the easier it is to serve and obey Him. You'll no longer care what the world says about you. You can answer, "I've heard from my Father - and I'm doing the good pleasure of His heart!" A flow of obedience must come out of your heart. It cannot be extracted from you or threatened out of you. It has to freely flow out of you!

And when your heart is enraptured with Jesus, such obedience naturally flows out. You won't have to constantly go before the Lord, crying, "Oh God, break the power of the devil over me!" No - all those chains will begin to fall off as you get to know His heart!

Are you in love with Jesus? If your answer is yes, then I have a question for you: How can you go throughout the week without spending time in His Word? How can you not yearn to get alone with Him in prayer? How can you not have a time of love talk with your Father, praising and worshiping Him, seeking to learn what pleases Him? These are foundational to obedience!

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Jesus tells us, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14:21). What an incredible promise - all based on an obedience of love!

So, search the gospels. Get to know Jesus' words. Read the red letters recorded in Matthew 5-7, beginning with the Sermon on the Mount. And as you learn His words, do them! God's commandments are not grievous; they are not a heavy burden laid upon us. On the contrary - obeying them becomes easier the more you grow to love Him.

That is building your house upon the rock! Then, when the storm comes, you can stand unafraid. Nothing will move you - because you are walking in loving, pleasing obedience to the Father.

But it is most important that you understand obedience is possible only by faith in the finished work of Christ. Only those living by faith in the perfect righteousness of Christ can obey Him in love. Obedience does not save us; that is possible only through the shed blood of Christ. Obedience flows out of our gratitude to God for having imputed to us the Lord's perfect righteousness. This is truly building on the rock. Amen!

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