

# Prophetic Call to Practical Preparation

by Reggie Kelly

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*Reggie Kelly's sermon calls for the Church to urgently prepare both spiritually and practically for the coming tribulation and to support the Jewish people in their time of need.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 22:3, Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 11:32, Daniel 12:1, Amos 3:7, Matthew 24:21, Romans 11:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:4, Revelation 1:2

**Topics:** "End Time Prophecy", "Faith And Obedience"

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## Description

Reggie Kelly delivers a prophetic sermon addressing the signs of impending disasters and the importance of the Church's role in preparing for the tribulation period. He emphasizes the need for the Church to awaken to the urgency of its tribulation task, particularly in providing refuge and support for Jews fleeing persecution. Kelly highlights the significance of interpreting prophecy, the alignment of events, and the Church's prophetic call to practical preparation and sacrificial love. He warns of the dangers of apostasy, the rejection of Israel's place in God's plan, and the critical role of faith and obedience in the face of coming judgment.

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## Transcript

Open Letter

Dear Brother,

I am most grateful for the two emails, very sobering, yet edifying in the assurance that God will do nothing except He reveal His intention to His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). I believe you are seeing something that significantly coincides with my own impressions concerning a particular pattern of events that is already beginning to manifest, and may be expected to escalate very shortly. It would also seem significant that such premonitions of impending disaster should come now, on the eve of the New Year. I also feel the same sense of sad foreboding and find the content of your dream to be in very convincing agreement with what I believe the Lord has shown me of His larger strategy of both judgment and mercy towards both Israel and the Church.

Well before the actual 'time of Jacob's trouble' (i.e., the final 3 ½ years of 'great tribulation,' cf. Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1-2; Mt 24:21), there will be, in my opinion, a series of preliminary disasters that will come to the Jewish people, not only in the Land, but in concentrations of Jewish populations throughout the great cities of the world. This preview of the greater and unequalled time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7) is a

necessary part of God's greater strategy to awaken the true believers. Let me explain. When in New York, I had the distinct sense that Jewish population centers here and throughout the world will be increasingly targeted by Islamic terrorism, and this well before the actual onset of Israel's final woes. This is what I think you are seeing and what I expect may begin very soon. I suspect this will take the form of random attacks on principal centers of Jewish population. I believe this pattern of terror will continue for a protracted space of time, creating conditions of fear and uncertainty that will prompt the movement and relocation of many Jews.

It is also reasonable to expect that terrorists will strategically aim to make physical proximity to Jewish enclaves a dangerous liability.[1] Initial outrage and sympathy for Jewish suffering will eventually turn to resentment and contempt. Through the attrition of disaster following upon disaster, popular sentiment will begin to yield to anti-Semitic propaganda, fingering the historical disposition of the Jew as a perennial source of world conflict. As pressures mount to the point of becoming personally threatening, otherwise cultured, pluralistic, humanistic hearts will begin to harden towards Israel and the Jews. There will be a natural desire to secure the safety of distance from Jews, who, together with all who are perceived as supporting Israel, are the especial objects of Islamic rage. Just as I once heard on a news program, an Islamic militant warn a reporter in an ominous demonic tone, "Stay away from the Jews; they have a dark future."

However, there is mercy in this tragic scenario. Through a pattern that will become plain to those who interpret prophecy literally, the question concerning the time of the Rapture will be critical, and whether the Church will be present to answer the prophetic call for wilderness preparation in anticipation of Israel's flight in the time of Antichrist. This expects that the true Church will begin to extricate itself from the Babylon of doctrinal confusion, and, in the urgency of prophetic fulfillment, take up its tribulation task to "instruct many" (Dan 11:33; 12:3). But even before the onset of the final tribulation events, the growing cloud of anti-Semitism will present the greater occasion for the Church to direct Jewish attention to the witness of prophecy, as ultimately all nations will be confronted with the same powerful evidence pointing to the prophetic testimony of Jesus (Rev 1:2,9; 12:17; 19:10b).

The Church must be powerfully awakened if it is to be prepared for the burden of receiving to places of refuge the multitudes of perplexed and disoriented fugitives of Antichrist persecution. The preliminary calamities that will befall urban Jewry throughout the world will awaken the true Church to the urgency of its tribulation task. Indeed, it will be a tender mercy and a gracious redemption of such calamities if the Church will find itself thrust into the wilderness in substantial advance of the time of the final tribulation. There is evidence to suggest such a hopeful response of the Church, because, by the time that the Antichrist is revealed and Jacob's trouble begins, a considerable amount of definite prophetic fulfillment will have already occurred (Dan 11:23-30 et al), and all that remains to be fulfilled, will, by this time, be in clearest evidence. This is why we do not expect that these events will overtake the true Church by surprise (1Thes 5:4). Before the 'Man of Sin' desecrates the temple of God at Jerusalem (Dan 11:31; Mt 24:15-16; 2Thes 2:3-4), the manifest fulfillment of prophecy will be such as to expose, for many, a fixed posture of unbelief. It will no longer be a question of 'hermeneutics,' but of faith or unbelief. This explains why it will be Jews in particular that will be taken by surprise and find themselves suddenly thrust into the wilderness as the scene of God's final covenant pleading (Ezk 20 et al), while the true Church will demonstrate its faith by its expectancy of events now seen to be certainly and immediately 'at hand' (Mk 13:23).

Because Antichrist's persecution of world Jewry begins by a sudden and unexpected invasion of the Land, it is reasonable to expect that wherever his power will reach, Jews will be the particular objects of his persecuting policies. It is possible that a principal reason for Christian suffering will be their identification with the despised people Israel, hated of all nations. It is also reasonable to infer that the apostate Church will enjoy at least a momentary asylum from antichrist persecution by its studied distance from 'Jacob' in his calamity. By this time, the true Church, distinguished by its prophetic certainty of the imminent outbreak of tribulation and Jewish flight, has already positioned itself for service appropriate to these conditions. This preparation of faith does not suggest escapism. It is no abandonment of the Church's call to evangelize the nations whatever the cost; rather it is the divinely ordained occasion for the greatest harvest of souls in history (Dan 11:32-35; 12:3-10 with Rev 7:9-14), through a witness of faith and power beyond anything that the Church has seen since its apostolic origins (Rev 12:10-11). It will be the Church's 'finest hour.'

In contrast to the believing remnant, the apostate Church will manifest its reprobate condition as it joins the world's chorus in saying "peace and safety" at the very time that Israel enters into its fateful "covenant with death and hell" (cf. Isa 28:15,18 with Dan 9:27; 11:22-23, and Ezk 38:8,11,14 with 1Thes 5:3). Only those who are bound over to a "strong delusion" will persist in their defiance of the most open and manifest fulfillment of prophecy witnessed in all of history. Indeed, such persistent rejection of the clearest evidence of the prophetic scriptures manifests something far deeper than a 'hermeneutical' problem; it reveals a powerful contempt towards God's election, particularly as it pertains to Israel and the Jew. Therefore, the crisis of Israel will be the last great 'stone of stumbling' that is calculated to manifest the secret disposition of every heart, as it will provoke to the surface all of the great issues of the faith. I strongly believe that no other single cause will more directly contribute to the final apostasy of Christendom than its long denial of the place of Israel in the plan of God (Rom. 11:25). Persistence in this refusal is precisely why 'the Day of the Lord' will overtake the apostate Church "as a thief" (Mt 24:43; 1Thes 5:2-4; 2Pet 3:10; Rev 16:15). However, by no means does this last great watershed issue of the faith displace the centrality of the gospel; rather, it forcefully demonstrates all that is implicit in the gospel.[2]

We may expect that in addition to the general conditions (plagues and natural disasters), described in the Lord's Olivet prophecy as "the beginning of sorrows" (Mt 24:8), random disasters inflicted by terrorist attacks within the world's cities will strain economies to the breaking. Such perilous conditions together with the manifest alignment of pre-tribulation events will force a complacent Church to consider more soberly the wisdom and urgency of practical alternatives to a disintegrating civilization that must dramatically decline before the rise and dominance of the Antichrist system. However, such practical preparation should not be postponed until it is clear that "the end" (Dan 9-12; Mt 24) has arrived, since this would forfeit not only the redemption of precious time, but it is to lose the compelling testimony that will confront unbelieving Israel as they will encounter a prophetic Church (Rev 12:7; 19:10b) already assembled in the wilderness in expectation of their coming. The Jewish fugitives of antichrist persecution will be confronted with the prophetic faith and sacrificial love of predominantly gentile believers, who, like Joseph of old, will have gone before them to prepare places of refuge and provision (cf. Isa 16:2-4 KJV; Rev 12:14 et al).[3]

I believe that in combination with the prophetic Word, preliminary disasters of the kind I have mentioned will awaken and prepare the Church to receive multitudes of Jews in flight. Jews, blinded to their own prophets, will not enjoy the Church's advantage of anticipation and preparation. They will be in a panicked

and helpless condition when the ultimate disaster comes with great suddenness. This is why the Church must prepare itself to receive them, and to bear before them a testimony of faith, love, and apostolic reality that is able to interpret Israel's crisis in the light of the covenant and prophecy. God intends that His mercy be mediated to Israel through the Church, particularly believing Gentiles who, though 'non-Torah' observant, exhibit the power of the promised Holy Spirit by voluntarily laying down their lives, and so move Israel to emulation in preparation for the day of national regeneration (Isa. 66:8; Zeph. 3:9; Ezek. 39:22; Zech. 12:10, et al). Thus, Israel has a rendezvous with the Church in the wilderness, in the midst of a mutually experienced antichrist persecution.[4]

Through the same events that will vex the nations and exacerbate anti-Semitic sentiment, the true Church will begin to awaken and come to an awareness of the message concerning Israel and the Church, not only to the recognition and restoration of Israel's theological centrality, but also to a prophetic call to practical preparation for the saving of life (a kind of Corrie Ten Boom expectancy),[5] because unless Jewish life is preserved, there can be no day of revelation and grace. Unless there is first 'survival,' there cannot be the opportunity for salvation. We must not separate what God has joined. Unless there is practical wisdom for natural provision (scripture denounces such failure to 'provide' 1Tim 5:8), the Church cannot proceed with its spiritual task.

The wisdom and leading of the Spirit in practical and physical things will require no less supernatural grace than the greater priority of instruction in the Word. Both are part of the Church's stewardship, to provide for the destitute in both spiritual and in natural things. The two must come together in combined witness to the truth of prophecy (Rev. 19:10b). Conviction of truth and its implications always leads to a response that is practical: "What must I DO?" "Lord, what will you have me DO?" The absence of faith's witness through works (true works of Abrahamic faith) discredits and invalidates the Church's identity as the prophetic people of the Spirit. Such unbelief will take a particularly costly toll as time runs out, and the day of opportunity contracts more and more into painful regret (as forcefully depicted in the movie, Schindler's List, where Schindler lamented for not having done more while there was opportunity).

It is a dangerous and foolish reductionism that supposes that the only incentive for practical preparation is the impulse of fear, and that such activity is prompted by sinful distrust of God's care and provision. This stigma is attached to any concrete action of this kind, partly because of certain artificial divisions that are sometimes made between spiritual and physical concerns, and partly because of society's reasonable skepticism towards what has proved an endless stream of false alarms (see my article on "Avoiding the False Alarms of Prophetic Speculation"). Examples are easily multiplied of disappointed apocalyptic dreams and failed expectations. Because of this painful history, the entire biblical genre known as 'apocalyptic' has passed into profound disrepute, not only in the Church, but Judaism is particularly skeptical of the 'apocalyptic tradition.' All of this has worked to create a natural cynicism that automatically categorizes things of this kind together, a kind of 'guilt by association,' so that an educated public is completely hardened to anything that presents itself as another round of apocalyptic excitement. And even though it is well documented that the early Church was thoroughly 'apocalyptic' in its orientation, a modern reiteration of this same apocalyptic urgency (the 'midnight cry' Mt 25:6) will be comfortably dismissed by a 'knowing' post-modern culture. Thus it is that, in the face of the most unprecedented evidence of prophetic fulfillment in history, "the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand" (Dan. 12:10).

Prophetic certainty implies a "moving with fear" (holy fear) as a necessary corollary to the 'obedience of faith.' "Noah being warned of God moved with fear ..." This is not the slavish fear of unbelief; but the true fear of God that is nothing else than the true knowledge of God. The obedience of faith in the prophetic

Word will once more be the difference between life and death. An example of this would be the difference that faith will make (and did make in 70 AD) when some will flee Jerusalem to places of refuge because of the prophetic Word (see Mt 24:16), while the unbelieving remain behind to their destruction.

Prophetic urgency does not depend on a certain knowledge of the precise relationship and alignment of prophetic events, but derives from an intense conviction concerning the nature of covenant righteousness and judgment,[6] as reflected in Josiah's trembling response to the hearing of the newly recovered 'book of the law' (2 Kings 22). As Josiah hears the catalogue of curses (Deut. 28-32; Lev. 26) threatened against covenant disloyalty, he recognizes at once that judgment is both certain and imminent. This is a true reading of the covenant; it is something much more than comfortable speculation over alternative interpretations of prophecy. Regardless of differences on the details of prophecy, only a profound dulling of the spiritual senses could rob the Church of the certainty that judgment is at the door. This alone should provide sufficient urgency for the Church to begin in "foresight of the evil" (Prov. 22:3) to take practical steps of preparation and provision "to save many alive" (Gen 50:20). It is disturbing to note that of the two basic schools of thought on prophecy (comprising the vast majority of evangelicals), neither conceives of a future role of the Church towards Israel. The so-called replacement school believes that the tribulation is past already, whereas 'dispensational pre-tribulationism,' although recognizing such a future period, exempts the Church from any role towards Israel by a supposed additional return of Christ to rapture the Church before the tribulation begins, leaving Israel to go it alone.

Except the trumpet give a certain sound, how shall a people prepare to do battle? This is the prophet's task, to sound the trumpet, to make the vision plain upon tables. How can a Church in doctrinal chaos and pitiful disunity prepare itself for the coming 'days of woe'? Which is also to ask, what will God do to bring the Church to a place of apostolic stature in order that it might be what it ought to be to the many that will have no other place to turn when disaster strikes? Except that judgment must begin first at the house of God, there might have been no Church fit to meet the kind of overwhelming demands that will come as a result of last days' shaking. Here especially is where the practical and the spiritual meet. Unless preliminary judgments create an early alert by which the people of God are awakened, there would have been no Church in the wilderness in readiness to receive the 'woman' in flight (Rev. 12:6, 14). If God did not awaken the Church through such a foretaste of intensifying tribulation, we might have delayed too long (Ps 110:3). The Church cannot postpone a timely obedience without consequence and regret. Therefore, because of preliminary devastations that will be inflicted in various places, a wakening Church may find increasing opportunity to extend mercy to Jews seeking refuge in out of the way places even before the 'great tribulation' begins.

In summary, if these things be so, such critical preparation should not wait till conditions leave no other alternative. This is to lose the precious advantage of time, and also the Church's active witness of faith to 'things not seen as yet.' Even when conditions seem for a moment to be 'on the mend,' this should not distract a "people that do know their God" and 'understand' (Dan 11:32-33) His covenant dealings. For example, before the final judgments of the great tribulation, a very decisive test is coming that will deceive many, because there will be every natural evidence of a provisional resolution to the mid-east conflict, and thus an apparent reprieve of hostilities. This will be the "covenant with death and hell" (Isa 28:15, 18; Dan 9:27; 11:23) that Israel will enter with the Antichrist. This will expose the hearts of all who are possessed of an inherent humanism[7] that naturally rejects the prophetic. It is the ultimate delusion (Dan 8:25; 11:21-24), a reprobating 'strong delusion' (2Thes 2:11) that will prove ultimately fatal for the apostate Church. This strong delusion will come as a fatal judgment on those who persist in unyielding rejection of

the prophetic witness of the true apostolic Church. It will be a witness so greatly attested in the prophetic scriptures that to continue in unbelief in the face of such compelling evidence is to be liable to the judgment of final reprobation.

Yours in Christ,

Reggie Kelly

New Year's Eve 2003

[1] This was the complaint by the Argentine neighbors near the Jewish Community Center and Israeli Consulate, which were bombed in the early 1990's; and that living close to Jews endangered both themselves and their children.

[2] As the capstone of the eschatological mystery (Rev 10:7), the age concludes with a crisis that centers significantly on the people and Land of the covenant. This age concluding crisis sets forth the gospel in clearest relief according to its original apocalyptic and apostolic context as a revealed mystery contained completely within the prophetic writings (compare Acts 26:22; Rom 16:25-26; Eph 6:19).

[3] Many passages throughout the prophets anticipate Jewish flight into the wilderness of Petra (Isa 16:2-4; 26:20; 42:11; Dan 11:41 et al). The contexts of these passages are in clear reference to Israel's last and greatest calamity. This was the expectation of the Qumran sectaries, the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Though local and regional in terms of specific reference, it is our view that what will come first to Jews in the Land (Dan 11:31; Mt 24:15-16) will spread to all nations that will be subject to the Antichrist (Rev 13:7).

[4] See Isa 35; Ezek 20; Rev 12 et al.

[5] This, of course, as many of you know, is Ben Israel's very mandate and call.

[6] The prophetic timetable (e.g., Dan. 9-12 with Rev 11-13) of apocalyptic judgment and eschatological salvation is conceived as the logic and goal of the covenant. The conditional aspects of the covenant are fully met in Christ as the 'end of the law for righteousness.' The conditional law of the blessing and the curse (Lev 26 and Deut 28-32) creates a divinely intended tension with the unconditional promise of an 'everlasting covenant.' This tension is resolved in the gospel, as the 'apocalyptic' revelation of God's hidden intention in Christ. The new covenant is nothing else than the means by which the more ancient 'everlasting covenant' promised to the Patriarchs is fulfilled, assuring an eternal salvation that is no longer subject to the curse by reason of a new creation. The inexorable nature of the law as the ethical context of all of God's covenant dealings, is never set aside, but lawfully and divinely fulfilled through the gospel as the basis of eternal salvation. This is the framework of all of God's covenant dealings with Israel. Therefore, the history and future of Israel is the history and future of the covenant.

[7] 'Humanism' signifies a naïve and unbiblical optimism concerning human nature, as opposed to the radical pessimism of the prophets, Jesus, and Paul (Jer 10:23; 17:9; Mk 10:18; Jn 2:25; Ro 7:18 et al).

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