

Burning Ones - Messengers of the Knowledge of God

The Crisis: 'My people perish for lack of knowledge' (Hosea 4:6)

Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: “ There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land. 2 By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery, They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed.

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

God points to a single cause of all Israel's wickedness and betrayal – 'there is no knowledge of God in the land', 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.'

Without the knowledge of God we have nowhere to turn to. Hosea 7 describes a terrifying situation – 'they return, but not to the Most High'

Hosea 7:10 Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the LORD his God or search for him

13 Woe to them, because they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me! I long to redeem them but they speak lies against me. 14 They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail upon their beds.

8:2 Israel will cry to Me, ‘My God, we know You!’ 3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him.

Israel cries out to God, and God longs to show mercy. But their cries are not from the heart and they are directed to a lie – they are directed to the God they have created in their own image and not to the Most High. And so God in His mercy **cannot** answer them. To relent from judgment would only reinforce the wrong ideas that are dooming them to destruction. God's mercy in that situation **is** judgment – to wake her up and bring her to the knowledge of Him.

12 I have written for him the great things of My law, But they were considered a strange thing.

14 “For Israel has forgotten his Maker, And has built temples;

Forsaking the Word is the root cause of the lack of the knowledge of God. Temples aren't enough – building churches is not the same as pursuing the knowledge of God, and it cannot replace it.

Tozer – 'All the problems of heaven and earth though they were to confront us together and at once, would be nothing compared with the overwhelming problem of God: That He is; what He is like; and what we as moral beings must do about Him.

The Crisis Deepens: God Collides with Earth

Matthew 24:3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Many will be deceived, and many will be offended. And the reason it will happen is because our hearts have not yet received or loved Him for who He really is. If when He shows up we're surprised by what

He looks like, we will be offended.

Will this generation be left asking 'Who is this?' (Isa 63, Ps 24, SoS 3)

Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not know the time of your visitation.**"

Israel's great tragedy was that they missed the hour of their visitation. It was intended for them, for their peace. But they had wrong ideas about who God was that did not allow them to receive Him when He showed up in their midst.

Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that **they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge**. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? It is possible to have zeal for God, but perish for lack of knowledge. That's terrifying.

To truly call on the name of the Lord requires knowing His name – it requires knowing who He is. This is not the general calling on 'God' – whatever you may consider God to be. Israel had heard of 'God', they had believed in 'God', they had called on 'God'. The problem was they had not heard and believed in God for who He really was.

The Solution: 'Come let us return to the Lord... let us pursue the knowledge of Him.' (Hos 6:1-3)

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more **in knowledge and all discernment**, 10 that you may **approve the things that are excellent**, that you may be **sincere and without offense** till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The promises of Joel 2 and Hosea 2 will be fulfilled. The prayer of Jesus in John 17 will be fulfilled. The prayers of Paul in Eph 1, Eph 3, Phil 1, Col 1 will be fulfilled.

Joel 2:28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

It's a pouring out of the Spirit unto the knowledge of God.

It is a last generation reality: 31 ...Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it leads to a great harvest of salvation by truly calling on the name of the Lord: 32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. (quoted in Romans 10)

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled With the **knowledge of** the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

God is looking for those who will seek – and then He will be found. He's looking for those who will ask the question 'Who is this?' now so that they can proclaim it now.

He is looking for shepherds after His own heart who lead the people with knowledge and understanding (Jer 3:15).

Something that cannot be shaken

Hebrews 12:25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Everything that can be shaken will be shaken so that what cannot be shaken can emerge purified. The only thing that can't be shaken is the kingdom of God – the church as God intends it.

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 He said to them, “But **who do you say that I am?**”

16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and **on this rock** I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

The foundation of that kingdom, of the church, is the revelation of God and our confession concerning who He is.

Matthew 7:24 “Therefore whoever **hears** these sayings of Mine, **and does** them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was **founded on the rock**.

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

The mandate of the church, of all ministry, is to build us up into the knowledge of God so that we will be connected to the head – Christ – and not blown about aimlessly.

Ephesians 4:11 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of **the knowledge of the Son of God**, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 **that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro** and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

The Vessels – Forerunners, Messengers of the Knowledge of God

Philippians 2:28 **Him we preach**, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we

may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Their message will be Him. Nothing more, nothing less. The mystery of God, revealed in Jesus Christ. Paul – 'I resolved to know nothing, but Christ and Him crucified.' (1 Cor 2:2)

John the Baptist – a picture of this kind of messenger

Luke 1:80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Luke 3:2 ...the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: “ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘ Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

Part of preparing the way of the Lord is preparing hearts to receive Him. It is making smooth the path to accepting God – clearing up false ideas about Him and releasing the true knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:4-5).

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ 31 I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” 32 And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” 35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

How long did John have to contend in the desert for that little piece of information: “How will I know Him?” “How will I recognize Him when He comes?”

John's ministry peaks with the simple declaration: 'Behold the Lamb.' After that, all his disciples leave him and he is totally forgotten about – but he rejoices in it.

John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

The Witness of Love

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Song of Solomon 5:6 I opened for my lover, but my lover had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer. 7 The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They beat me, they bruised me; they took away my cloak, those watchmen of the walls! 8 O daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you—if you find my lover, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.

Friends - 9 How is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your beloved better than others, that you charge us so?

Beloved - 10 My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. 11 His head is purest

gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven. 12 His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels. 13 His cheeks are like beds of spice yielding perfume. His lips are like lilies dripping with myrrh. 14 His arms are rods of gold set with chrysolite. His body is like polished ivory decorated with sapphires. 15 His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars. 16 His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Song of Solomon 6 – Friends - 1 Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your lover turn, that we may look for him with you?

Her seeking (in the face of persecution, in a way that is considered radical) begs the question.

Her answer is a witness, not to them (intentionally anyway), but to her lover – she wants all those who have seen her to testify to Him of how she loves Him.

Her description of His beauty completely wins them over to become seekers themselves.

Burning Ones

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.” 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.” 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

The woeful inadequacy of our testimony – 'unclean lips'

The power to shake the temple – not the words, but the burning heart of the speaker

The seraphim – hovering to get near, burning feet and all. Struggling to hold it in, and then crying out
God responds to Isaiah's prayer:

I am a man of unclean lips -> the coal

I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips -> 'Whom shall I send?'

Fire in the Waiting

Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. 7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him

God is zealous to see us burn

Isaiah 62:1 For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns.

But He has some conditions: Delight yourself in Him (Bridal Paradigm), commit your way to Him (Song of Songs 4->Song of Songs 5), rest **in** Him

Song of Songs 4:16 Awake, north wind, and come, south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread abroad. Let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits.

We have to be fully yielded in love. We cannot just give Him the fruits of our heart (garden), we have to give Him our hearts. We cannot pick and choose which parts burn – such is the nature of an all-

consuming fire. If we want to pray with fire, speak with fire or minister with fire, then we have to accept the consuming nature of the fire of God's love in our hearts – moving us toward holiness and toward agreement with His heart.

Luke 10:38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

We need a shift in our thinking on what it means to wait on the Lord. If we're off running around, doing our own thing, not paying Him any attention, then we're not waiting on Him. We're waiting... but not on Him. Waiting on the Lord requires pressing in to His face – being with Him where He is.

Waiting rightly takes spiritual violence

Matthew 11:7 As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' 11 "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.

Waiting only sets us on fire if we're waiting in the fire – before the throne of *the* Burning One

Daniel 7:9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.

Psalm 104:4 Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.
Ministering before the throne of God is the sure way to get lit.

If God lights a lamp...

John 5:35 He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

Luke 11:33 "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. 34 The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

I used to not particularly want a lampstand – I wanted to be lit, but I didn't care for the lampstand. But look what Jesus says to the church:

Revelation 2:1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the

seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

The lampstand is not just a place before the public eye. It's a place before God's eyes. When He lights a lamp, the first and most important thing to Him is that it be set before Him where we minister to Him. He makes His ministers a flame of fire.

Volunteering to burn – 'Here am I! Send me' – not volunteering as a prophet, but for what he now sees it takes to be a prophet – a burning heart.
Some will burn before men (John Wesley – 'Set yourself on fire and men will come to watch you burn')
All will burn before God