

Dear Friend,

You and I are living in a moment in history when we are beginning to witness fearful things. Jesus cautioned us that people's hearts will begin to fail as they see the fruit of sin and rebellion against the one true God reach "critical mass" on the earth. Evil religionists are attempting to shock the world with the barbarity of their quest to create world disorder. Indeed, people here and everywhere are becoming afraid.

I believe that we, as the Church of Jesus Christ, are about to see the opening of a window of tremendous opportunity to reach people with the truth of God's way of salvation. On our part, a call to pray is going out from Times Square Church to all of the United States. I know that this call is God-initiated. Jesus is calling us back to Himself to personally know and be ambassadors of the incredible mercy, peace and hope for the future that only He can offer.

Please pray for us and pray that His mercy call will be heard by uncountable numbers of people in our time. You can go to wwprayer.org to listen to the 9/11 special that was broadcast by 140 radio stations nationwide and to hear the one minute devotionals, "it's time to pray," that are broadcast daily.

Let's hold each other up in prayer and believe together that the best days are yet to come.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

THE FUTURE IS ALREADY WRITTEN by Carter Conlon

As you look around at all that is occurring in the world today, perhaps you are beginning to wonder: What does the future hold? Where is this world heading? What is my part in it all?

Many signs precede the judgment of God on a nation.

When we take time to study the Scriptures carefully, it becomes obvious that certain behaviors of humanity never fail to elicit a standard, established response from God. So in that sense, the future is already written. For example, we see in the Bible that many signs precede the judgment of God on a nation—one of which is the rise of smooth-talking prophets. These are prophets who say to the people, "All is well! Go ahead and pursue the course that you have set before you; God is with you." They speak only sweet, positive things while the nation is heading into judgment. The devil puts these prophets there to lull God's people to sleep—to cause them to abandon the prayer meeting; to rob them of the sense of urgency and an eternal perspective. Even the apostle Paul warned us that a time will come when people "will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Timothy 4:3).

The Bible tells us that God specifically instructed the prophet Isaiah to write down the following words so that future generations might be instructed by them. Speaking of Israel, the Lord said: "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" (Isaiah 30:9–11).

God's own people had reached a point where they could no longer be spoken to. They were essentially saying, "Don't stand in our way; don't tell us that the journey we are undertaking is not a good one and that we must turn and go another way. We do not want to hear it. Tell us instead that God is with us and that we are going to prosper!"

"Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a [fragment] to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal

out of the pit” (Isaiah 30:12–14). God was saying to Israel, “The collapse of what you are building and trusting in is going to be so sudden, so complete, that there will be nothing left to offer you any comfort.”

How tragic it is when people who once knew the voice of God begin to fall into a form of spiritual stupor!

“For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift” (Isaiah 30:15–16). Nevertheless, Israel persisted in her rebellion. “We don’t need your plan, God. We have our own plan. We don’t need Your ways because we have found a way that is better.”

How tragic it is when people who once knew the voice of God begin to fall into a form of spiritual stupor! This is what happened to Israel. They had the word of God; they had the history of His faithfulness; they had the presence of God. Yet I believe they eventually became bored with His presence, leading them to craft another god—a god that allowed them to pursue the directions and impulses of their own hearts. They began transgressing the boundaries that God had clearly established, calling that which was evil, good, and that which was good, evil. All the while, they mistakenly believed they would escape the consequences that had come upon people who had done similar things in times prior.

■ FOUR HUNDRED SMOOTH-TALKING PROPHETS

Let’s take a moment to look at a story where we see these smooth-talking prophets in action. The kingdom of God at that particular time was divided into the north and the south. Ahab, the king of Israel, had witnessed the presence and power of God in the past; he had even had conversations with the prophet Elijah. But somehow Ahab could never bring himself to yield to the Lord. Instead, he surrounded himself with four hundred prophets whose sole ministry was to tell him that everything was well.

Beware of being in places where you should not be and listening to voices you should not be listening to. They will only take away your strength.

There was another man named Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. Unlike Ahab, he could still hear the voice of the Lord. However, Jehoshaphat was in a place where he should not have been. The Scriptures tell us that Jehoshaphat *“joined affinity with Ahab...And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war”* (2 Chronicles 18:1, 3). This serves as a grave reminder to those who can still hear the voice of God today: Beware of being in places where you should not be and listening to voices you should not be listening to. They will only take away your strength.

These two kings agreed to go to battle together and attack Ramoth-gilead, and four hundred prophets were there to encourage their plans. Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, even made horns of iron and stood before Ahab, saying, “With these you will push the Syrians back until they are destroyed” (see 2 Chronicles 18:10). I can picture all of these prophets in a frenzy, all predicting victory. It must have been an exciting place to be.

However, in the midst of it all, Jehoshaphat turned to Ahab and asked, “Is there anybody else left? Is there any other voice in your kingdom?” Why, after four hundred witnesses all saying the same thing, would he ask for one more? It was because Jehoshaphat was a righteous man, and there was something in his heart that troubled him. This troubling was signaling to him that he was not listening to the voice of God. As a king, he also would have been familiar with people telling him whatever he wanted to hear in order to gain or retain favor. In other words, Jehoshaphat could discern that these prophets were not speaking for anyone’s advantage but their own; he knew schmoozers when he heard them! They didn’t care if Ahab died in battle as long as they could keep their position and influence.

That is the difference between a true and a false representative of God. A true representative will stand and speak for God no matter what the cost. On the other hand, false representatives will tell you exactly what your heart wants to hear, affirming your direction even if it is leading to spiritual death. They do not really care about you, as long as your check is going in the bucket. You can be going to bars and clubs on Friday night, and they will persist in telling you on Sunday how wonderful you are and what a prosperous destiny you have before you. Oh, yes, the assemblies of the

false can be exciting. The singers can sing, the prophets can prophesy, and you might even end up clapping and shouting with the crowd. But when you walk out into the parking lot, if you are a righteous person, you will be left with a strange, inward feeling that you have not really heard from God.

This country will turn against the voices of those who are standing and pleading with this nation not to continue in its immorality.

Ahab replied to Jehoshaphat, “Ah, yes, there is one more in my kingdom, but I hate him! He never speaks good, only evil” (see 2 Chronicles 18:7). Here we see what the human heart is capable of—it can take the Word of God and begin to call it evil. This prophet Micaiah was the one man who refused to simply stand and agree with all of the rest, validating Ahab’s impression of what his life should be. In reality, Ahab was hours away from death, and Micaiah was the one voice that could still save his life!

■ ONE MORE VOICE

By the time Micaiah comes into the court, he is aware that Ahab is so bent on his own will that nothing will stop him. He gives this word to the king: “Go, prosper, it will all be well” (see 2 Chronicles 18:14). Micaiah says the same thing as the four hundred others! But Ahab looks at him and says, “How many times do I have to tell you to speak nothing but truth to me in the name of the Lord?” (see verse 15). Isn’t that amazing? What mixture was in this man!

Micaiah then proceeded to speak the truth to Ahab: *“I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace”* (2 Chronicles 18:16). The voice of God was warning Ahab that he was on a path leading to destruction—not only for him but for those under his influence as well.

Nevertheless, Ahab refused to listen to the prophet’s words. Instead, what did Micaiah get for standing for truth? *“Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace”* (2 Chronicles 18:26). This is what often happens when it comes time for people to pay the price for their stubbornness—they lock away the voice of God and feed it the bread and water of affliction.

Sadly, I believe this is soon to come to America. This country will turn against the voices of those who are standing and pleading with this nation not to continue in its immorality—to stop murdering children for convenience and marrying people that God says should not be married. We will soon all be fed the bread of water and affliction, and I don’t anticipate it will be too long in the future.

If there is any area of mixture in your life today, I implore you to get up and get out of those places.

■ A PLACE OF MIXTURE

“And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they surrounded him to fight...” (2 Chronicles 18:31).

What Jehoshaphat did not realize until the day of battle was that his life of mixture had set him up to be surrounded by his enemies.

Perhaps you, too, have begun to realize lately, “Oh, God, I am not anything near what I should be for You! I am supposed to be victorious. I should be leading my family and others around me into victory, yet I find myself surrounded by enemies!” Maybe you have been trying to get God to agree with your own plans, gravitating toward voices that were giving credibility to what was actually taking away your strength.

You and I should not be spending all of our time simply fighting our own inner struggles when we are called to fight something much bigger.

If there is any area of mixture in your life today—things you have embraced, practices or people you are involved with that you know you should not be—I implore you to get up and get out of those places. Get to a place where you can open the Bible and say, “God, speak to me plainly. Speak to me about the purpose You have for my life, not my idea of what my life should be. Give me power to get out of this place of mixture, out of every place that has weakened me. Give me the power to leave things that need to be left and to lay hold of things that I need to lay hold of.”

You and I should not be spending all of our time simply fighting our own inner struggles when we are called to fight something much bigger. We are called to lead people into freedom and victory, to bring them out of prisons and places of despair.

We are called to reach the hopeless and the homeless, the addicted and the destitute, bringing them into this glorious kingdom of God.

CRY OUT TO THE LORD

Although Jehoshaphat suddenly found himself surrounded by enemies, we can still take heart, for the Scriptures tell us, “...*Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him; and God moved them to depart from him*” (2 Chronicles 18:31).

There must have been a cry in Jehoshaphat’s heart: “Oh, God, I have been living in a place of mixture. I have been listening to voices I should not have been listening to, hanging around people who were taking away my spiritual strength. Oh, God, one more time, would You allow me to live? Would You fight against my enemies, get me out of this place of weakness, and take me into a place of victory? Give me a voice again to be able to lead your people in Judah into righteousness!”

God caused Jehoshaphat’s enemies to depart from him. You see, when God speaks, everything in creation must obey—everything that has surrounded us, everything that has been tormenting our minds, every lying voice that has been trying to affirm a wrong direction, everything that has gained access to us because of mixture. God can cause all of these enemies to depart when we cry out to Him!

I foresee very difficult days ahead of us. But in the midst of that difficulty, I see multitudes—“Jehoshaphats” from all over this country who have been sitting in the wrong place—finally getting up and saying, “I am going back to that

place of strength and victory that was won for me on Calvary. I am going to bend my knee to the Lord, even if it means dropping my own plans and ambitions. I am going back to find the will of the One who died for me.”

It is time to lay down our plans and cry out to God again for our homes, our families, this generation, the future of our cities.

Come what may, remember that we as the people of God are not destined for defeat. We are not destined to die with Ahab and those who refuse to heed the voice of God. We are not destined to be overthrown like the smooth-talking prophets who do not know the heart of God. We are destined to live in victory. We are destined to be more than conquerors through Christ who loves us. And so it is time to lay down our plans and cry out to God again for our homes, our families, this generation, the future of our cities. It will not be a popular time to stand for God, but there will be a glorious touch of the Holy Spirit on those who have the sense to call out to God now. He will give us supernatural strength. He will cause our enemies to depart from us, and we will see that all things still remain possible to those who believe!

Carter Conlon
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CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor of Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.” It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	The Gate*	

*Youth and Young Adult Service

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This newsletter is an edited version of “THE FUTURE IS ALREADY WRITTEN,” a sermon given on June 15, 2014 in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at tscnyc.org. You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version.