

Michael A. Landrum on September 11, 2001

A Word from the Lord:

On the morning of September 11, 2001, after watching live television images of the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City, I went from my home to my medical office. The room was quiet; most of my patients had cancelled their appointments for the day. I sat down in the chair behind my desk and began to listen to what the Lord would tell me about the meaning of these events and their significance for His people. I turned to my Amplified Bible on a nearby shelf and opened it at random. Immediately my eyes fell upon the Book of Numbers, Chapter 16. I almost turned the pages away in a conscious attempt to find some solace, perhaps in the Psalms, but instead I had a firm check in my spirit in a sense of direction that I should read this chapter. As I began to do so, I realized almost immediately that the Lord was speaking to me.

The passage speaks of Moses and the people of Israel in the wilderness at the time of a rebellion lead by Korah, one of the great grandsons of Levi with the help of others, including 250 other Levites, which were referred to as “men well known and of distinction.” The authority of Moses and Aaron was directly challenged and called into question. The chapter significantly speaks of the fact that the presence of the Lord was able to be visibly observed at the Tent of Meeting. Moses called all of the rebels to come stand at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. When they did, the earth opened and swallowed part of their company and the 250 were destroyed by fire which “came forth from the Lord.” Although the entire congregation of Israel was initially afraid and fled at this sight, they returned the next day again to accuse Moses and Aaron again. Then, significantly: “When the congregation was gathered against Moses and Aaron, they looked at the Tent of Meeting and, lo, the cloud covered it and they saw the Lord’s glory. . . and the Lord said to Moses get away from this congregation that I may consume them in a moment. And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and Moses said to Aaron, take a sensor and put fire in it from off the alter and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague has begun! So Aaron took the burning sensor as Moses commanded and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold the plague was begun among the people; and he put on the incense and made atonement for the people and he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed”. [Verses 42 to 48]

Afterwards, in verse 17, the Lord commended Aaron and promised him a prominent place of distinction and favor for him and his descendants to stand in the presence of the Lord, whereas the rest of the Levites were simply to attend to the housekeeping chores of the temple.

As I considered these passages, verse 42 particularly riveted my attention. The Lord spoke to my heart and showed me the following:

(a) The Lord had chosen up to that time to make Himself visibly present among His people and present at the holy place in the Tent of Meeting. (This was so because He has always sought a people for Himself as is reflected from Genesis to Revelation and is codified in the Jewish feast of Succoth, which is also known as the feast of Tabernacles, signifying the dwelling place of God with man; or, retrospectively, the “tabernacling” of God with man as seen in the wilderness with the people of Israel.)

[b] That the people, themselves, had become brazenly rebellious and not even the authority of Moses and Aaron and the visible presence of God appeared to dissuade them.

[c] The juxtaposition (and obvious disparity) between the loving God who sought to make His place among His people and a rebellious nation in open defiance of the Lord’s rule of order-- was incompatible. The result became a “flash point” of judgment in the form of a plague against the rebellious people.

(d) The first response of Moses and Aaron was to fall on their face before the Lord. So we, also, should likewise be falling on our face as the immediate response to impending calamity. We should be seeking the mind of God with the kind of burning intensity that such a crucial moment would demand. There is an unspoken sort of “between the lines” implication at the exchange between Moses and God between verse 45 and 46. All we are told is that Moses told Aaron to take a sensor and go quickly into the midst of the congregation to intercede--and make atonement--for them. So it is that in a moment of such calamity as this, we must learn to seek the mind of Christ for His leading, and having received it, to act upon it immediately. This case is a “type” of the leading we should expect from the Lord in our own day. He wants us to intercede in the several ways in which He would call us, in order to go make atonement.

The fact that Aaron literally ran to the task was all-important. As such, Aaron is a “type” of Christ, who set Himself as intermediary between “the living and the dead” to save us from certain destruction and to make atonement with God for the sins which separate us from Him. Eventually, the sin of rebellion brings judgment.

(e) That same spirit of Aaron, which is the spirit of the Messiah, is now present in every Believer, so that with that spirit every listening Believer can respond similarly and appropriately to “stand between the living and the dead.” In our day, such an intermediary capacity has suddenly become as tangibly crucial as it was in the rebellion of Korah. The juxtaposition of the rebellion of the people and the nearness of the Lord was the very reason why judgment was precipitated.

With these points I now realized that the events of September 11, 2001, were not because God is farther away from us than ever, but because--on the contrary--He is literally drawing nearer than ever. Jesus promised that He would come again and taught His disciples to pray “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” For the last two millennia the church has prayed this prayer at almost every gathering of sincere believers. For the last two thousand years, we have literally invited the Lord to “draw near” us. The events on the morning of September 11th tell us exactly what He is in the process of doing. His drawing near literally precipitates the spark of crisis--such as was seen in the wilderness. This “spark” takes place only when these two distinct issues are present, face-to-face: The near presence of God and the unyielding rebellion of man. Chapter 18, verse 1 (in the Amplified version), describes that Aaron’s ministry was to remove the iniquity of the sanctuary, which was to include the guilt for the offenses which the people UNKNOWINGLY COMMIT in the face of the manifestations of His presence. It is not His purpose to destroy those who are in ignorant rebellion, but rather to win them back again to Himself with the realization of His love and desire to dwell with them, and to take care of them. To act in the role of an “Aaron” so that, people may be redeemed to God and protected from inevitable judgment, is a high honor. But Aaron was offering incense in a fashion that was “coloring outside the lines”, since he had never been taught to administer an offering for the people in such a fashion. Yet the act was timelessly in keeping with the very mind of God. Aaron anticipated God’s intention. God approved that anticipation. It accessed His Presence.

As we learn to draw nearer to His presence, we learn to love that presence. As we love that presence, we learn to never leave it. This is the very mind of God for His people. He never wants us to leave His presence. It was (is) His design that He would dwell with us. His will is that there should be no impediment to perfect fellowship with us. That fellowship comes at a price. The price is our surrender.

The issue here and as it involves these calamities of our day is not just that sinful man is coming under judgment from an angry God (although this is so and will increasingly be seen) but more urgently that the love of God is such that He is not willing that any should perish “but that all should come to repentance.” The Lord showed me that there would be many in these days who, in the name of the Lord, would bluntly pronounce the judgments of God on men, but who would not run out into the congregation to make atonement. He told me clearly that these are false

prophets because they hold to only part of the truth; only that part which would describe judgment for sin, but would not describe the passion of the Lord to deliver men from sin and death. Furthermore, He would beckon to us, beyond mortal imagination, at the prospect that He is in fact drawing near. These calamities are taking place precisely because He is drawing near, not because he is leaving us. His message is one of earnest admonition for reconciliation rather than judgment before it is too late. Any message other than this is less; assigning God merely a police capacity at punishing sin. It is simply not discerning His plan of the ages for "Heaven come to earth."

Just as Aaron was elevated and promoted, Christ also was promoted after He made intercession for us on the cross. He now "ever lives to make intercession for us" in THE PRESENCE of the Lord.

It is the Will of God that we draw near to Him at this precise moment. He has begun answering the prayer of the church that he draw near to us. We must now go forth as the brides with our lamps of oil prepared and ready. We must now go forth to meet Him and faithfully respond as that priestly people He intends us to be to bring the rule of heaven to earth before the eyes of the entire world, for we will shortly see the fulfillment of the promise of God. In Genesis 3:15, the promise "He shall bruise and tread your head underfoot", was fulfilled on the Cross, but also in Revelation 21: 3-4: "The abode of God is with men and He will live (TENT) among them, and they shall be His people, and God shall personally be with them and be their God. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be anguish—sorrow and mourning—nor grief nor pain any more; for the old conditions and the former order of things have passed away."

The body of the Lord Jesus Christ stands expectant for such a time as this. "He who is victorious shall inherit all these things and I will be God to him and he shall be My son." (Rev. 21:7)