

Revival: “If My People, Who are Called by My Name....”

Part 3: Reality Check! The Restrainer of Evil

Please turn to 2 Thessalonians 2.

Sermon #1: Background of 2 Chronicles 7:14.

- Solomon finished Temple. Before God can move into His house....
- Phase 1: Bring treasures in.
- Phase 2: Make agreement between God & people, sealed by Ark.
- Phase 3: Blood sacrifice to atone for sin, sprinkling of blood on articles.
- Phase 4: God accepts sacrifice by sending fire—wrath—from Heaven to burn up offering.
- Phase 5: God moves into Temple and glory fills the house!
- WE are God’s house and the same was done with us!
- WRATH: no more for the church or individual Christians?
- The nations are another story....
- The Church is its own nation, and the USA is not the Church.
- The Church must lead the USA (and the world) in repentance and the call for revival!
- If we repent, God will heal the “land” of the Church and I believe the “land” of the USA will follow!
- I believe America will be one of the countries to stand against the Revelation 13 Beast system and while a strong economy and military will be necessary, the foundation of our ability to stand in the evil day will be Jesus.
- America must repent of the wickedness we’ve fallen into and turn back to Christ!

Sermon #2: History of American Revival:

- 1st Great Awakening started around 1730 in America’s infancy, when we were still the 13 colonies under England.
- Preachers like Jonathan Edwards & George Whitefield partnered with God and the Holy Spirit swept through our tiny country!
- The theme was repentance, and the Colonists did so in massive numbers.
- The writing of the Declaration, Bill of Rights, Constitution, and the Revolutionary War itself were directly inspired by this revival!
- The Devil responded by sending the most powerful empire in the world to stop us—yet we prevailed...why?
- It wasn’t American grit, spirit, ingenuity, or the spirit of independence...it was the Spirit of God!
- The Colonists chose to partner with God in the revival and were thus equipped to stand and defend when the evil day came and when the enemy landed on our shores.
- 100 years later America fell into rationalism and self-exultation. We were prosperous, safe, and growing in real estate, economy, and military.
- In our pursuit of the world, we indulged in terrible sins like slavery and conquest.

- The Lord gave us another chance to partner with Him in repentance and revival in the 2nd Great Awakening.
- Revival started on the American Frontier where life was dangerous and uncertain, then headed back east where life was safe and secure.
- I love safety, security, and prosperity...but its also a trap for Christians. It causes us to become complacent and forget what God did for us. We turn inward where “1st World Problems” become mountains and look upon God as a divine genie Who should fulfill our desires.
- We exalt success and claim the credit, leaving God out.
- I would that American Christians has “Jesus Exceptionalism” vs. “American Exceptionalism.”
- God warned ancient Israel during the Exodus that security and prosperity would cause them to forget about and turn away from Him.
- The 2nd GA established Christianity as the infrastructure of American Society, promoted women’s rights, and birthed the Abolitionist movement.
- USA was Christian but not a theocracy.
- Theocracies don’t work because no human being can handle being both an earthly King and Priest and rule over a country! Rome & England are two failed theocratical experiments and in modern times countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia are tyrannical and oppressive.
- Only Jesus can be trusted with this level of power! When He returns He will be both King and High Priest of the world and will never fall to corruption!
- Until then, there does need to be separation of powers as well as church and state.
- Politicians DO have the right to vote or legislate according to their faith, whether Christian, Muslim, or Atheist! And we have the right and power to vote them in or out.
- These checks and balances are necessary!
- The greatest influence of the 2GA was NY where George Whitefield concentrated his efforts.
- We come now to modern times where, in my opinion, wickedness in our country is worse than it has been in my lifetime.
- Chaos, violence, and lawlessness is rearing its head as Satan attempts to dismantle the USA so that we cannot fight against the future manifestation of the Beast system.
- He seeks to destroy our economy, military, domestic authority (police), and the most important one of all: the Church.
- He sees the nation of the Church within the USA and realizes we are his biggest threat!
- I believe we are being primed for a 3rd Great Awakening!

RANDY. My brother-in-law Randy was a police officer for 27 years, starting right here in Addison. Over his many years of service I often saw his frustration at the lack of awareness that us non-police had over the amount of evil they restrained. He would point out that we walked around and lived our daily, regular, secure lives unaware of how many bad apples were operating around us and what the police were doing to stop them.

2 METH LABS. I left NYC to come back to Addison because God called me here and I love it. I longed to escape the concrete jungle and return to the green rural setting of my hometown. A part of me also felt more safe and secure here, yet every now and then the reality of unseen evil would come into the open. About 5 years ago a meth lab blew up on Reservoir Road only ¼ mile away from my house, and 2 years ago another meth lab was raided by the police right across the street from my house! SWAT was there with long guns along with a guy in a fancy CDC type suit testing the product to confirm it was meth. TWO meth labs right next to my house...and I thought I was getting away from that when I left NYC.

MILITARY AND POLICE. Our military and police have the same thankless job that God does: restraining evil. In my prayers for past Blue Lives Matters events we've held, God told me the same thing my brother in law did: *that He restrains far more evil than any of us are aware of.*

MOLEHILLS TO MOUNTAINS. Consider this: here in America we make small evils into massive tsunami's. I can't stand the fact that Satan is inspiring social media giants to censor any information or opinion that goes against his wicked attempts to indoctrinate and disciple us. As of October 1st, Facebook is instituting new rules giving themselves the ability to censor our content even more than now. Churches in states like CA and IL are being openly threatened and not just with shutdown: but fines and taking of their property.

Here's a quote from *Charisma Magazine*:

As you may recall, the city of Chicago launched a series of attacks against our clients, Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church and Logos Baptist Ministries. In one of the most shocking cases of anti-Christian tyranny we've yet seen, Chicago threatened "summary abatement" against the churches unless they stopped worshipping with more than 10 people.

"Summary Abatement," according to Illinois law, is notification that the city intends to seize and *destroy* property it deems to be a "nuisance." For continuing to preach the Word of God, the churches were declared a "public nuisance."

On July 13, California banned *all* worship, including home Bible studies and fellowship. On Sept. 2, the City of San Francisco issued a chilling letter to Lighthouse Church—stop worshipping or face abatement.

"Failure to comply with the Health Officer's orders and directives is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment or both. ... The Director of Public Health may cause the abatement and removal of the nuisance and the owner shall be indebted to the City for the costs, charges, and fees incurred by the City and County of San Francisco by reason of the abatement and removal of such nuisance. ... If you continue to fail to comply with the Health Order, you may be liable for other charges and costs, including, but not limited to, administrative costs, fines, attorneys' fees and penalties."

WE ARE THREAT! I repeat: in my lifetime I have not seen such tyranny which not only violates the Constitution, but is openly attempting to stop the Church from operating. We are the Devil's biggest threat because we are joined with Jesus and house His Spirit! We are one with Jesus AND His victorious plan!

NIGERIA. As frustrating as the news I just quoted is, Christianity is far more persecuted in other countries who have not been given the same destiny as America: to stand against the Beast. Just days ago 500 Christians were killed by the Islamic government which rules there and, according to *Christianity Daily*, the death toll is up to 11,500 Christians not just persecuted, but *executed*, for the namesake of Jesus Christ since 2015. According to Alexa, the population of Addison, NY is 1690 people which means that 6.8 times our population has been martyred in the last 5 years and that's only in one small country.

Now I ask you to turn to 2 *Thessalonians* 2:

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (ESV)

¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,

² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,

¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,

¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

LAST DAYS? People love to ask me if we're living in the Last Days before the return of Jesus and they hope we are, longing for the Rapture to deliver us from the temptations of the flesh and evil of the world.

REALITY CHECK! At the same time, few of us in America are prepared for what comes first...what we just read in 2 Thessalonians. Why?

- What is the Church's reaction to the chaos and conflict going on in the US right now?
- Are we giving in to anger, fear, anxiety, and even vengeful spite (hoping that _____ is going to get their comeuppance?)
- Are we longing for "things to return to normal"?

RESTRAINER HAS WORKED HARD. Here in America, the Restrainer of evil and lawlessness has exercised the greatest effort compared to any other country in the world, clearly evidenced by the fact that we enjoy more prosperity, security, and peace than any other country in the world. Again I say: that's not because of American might, power, or exceptionalism...it's the grace of God. I believe it's the plan of God for us to remain strong so that we can resist the Beast.

LETTING GO. Yet even here, in the land of purple mountains majesty, the Restrainer is already letting go of the reins and allowing the horses of lawlessness more freedom.

Let's exposit 2 Thessalonians.

- **Verse 1-3:** Jesus will not return until “the rebellion” takes place and the Greek word is “apostasy”—to fall away from the Christian faith.
- **If we apply this to the USA**—a once Christian country—than can we see how recent actions in NY, CA, and IL might be indicators of apostasy? Among many other things that have taken place over the decades? Did you watch the Cahn video I posted??
- **Verse 3** tells us the Antichrist will not show until he's no longer being restrained...God is restraining the ultimate man of evil from appearing!
- This implies that, at some point, God will stop restraining. He let go of the reins and the 4 horsemen will be free to ride. The Antichrist is the 1st Horseman, the rider of the white horse.
- The Antichrist is the “man of lawlessness” meaning he's the full and final manifestation of the same. When he finally shows up, we'll know the Restrainer is no longer restraining...at all.

REALITY CHECK: things are going to get worse before they get better. That's the reality of living in the end times.

“Thanks Pastor Scott, for the encouraging and uplifting message I was needing to hear today!”

Jesus prophesied to make things better on the outside when He returns...but His first and BEST promise was to partner with us to make things better on the INSIDE of us.

**A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CO-LABORS WITH HIM TO DO 2 CHRONICLES 7:14
WITHIN OURSELVES FIRST BEFORE IT'S DONE IN THE WORLD, AMERICAN
CULTURE, WASHINGTON DC, OUR FAMILY, OR OUR SPOUSE.**

In Matthew 24 Jesus lists the terrible things that will take place during the Tribulation period from natural disasters which affect the planet to personal persecution even unto death. He says that the love of OTHERS will grow cold. OTHERS will be deceived by false prophets. OTHERS shall be offended. OTHERS will betray. OTHERS will worship the AOD.

He says something different to you and I:

- “Don’t be afraid”
- “Don’t be deceived.”
- “Don’t believe in the false Messiah who appears.”
- “Endure to the end.”

LET BAD STUFF HAPPEN. In other words, during that time, He’s going to let all that “bad” stuff happen in the world. He’s not going to calm the storm going on in the world, but desires to co-labor with any who are still here to NOT get caught up in offense, deception, love growing cold, betrayal of others, and the worship of a false god.

PRAYERS AVOID INTERNAL? Are there times when our prayers avoid us partnering with the Holy Spirit to work 2 Chronicles 7:14 within, and are directed at God performing a miraculous act elsewhere?

- We’re praying God will change the USA?
- Bring justice to rioters and looters?
- Open the eyes of politicians and family members who are deceived and believing in a “false prophet”?
- Change our spouse so that they’ll finally start being the Godly spouse God called them to be?

Perhaps it’s time we, as the Church, understand that God is letting loose the restraints and allowing lawlessness to increase, as the Bible states?

Perhaps it’s time for our desires and prayers to be directed toward personal change—2 Chronicles 7:14 style—which is where God truly wants to work?

Maybe it’s time to stop hoping for the Rapture to snatch us away before the end of this sentence and start humbling ourselves, seeking His face, praying, and turning from our wicked ways?

DRIVEN BATTY. We’ve driven ourselves batty praying and wanting God to calm the external storm and praying for the same, only to see no results. I believe that true change and revival will come only when the Church applies 2 Chronicles 7:14 to itself, on both a national and personal level.

CONFESSION. I have a confession to make: as much as the current chaos and lawlessness upsets me and the persecution of the American Church is infuriating me, we (the Church) cannot go back to same old, same old. It wasn't working. We fell into the saying from God I quoted last week from Deuteronomy, about what happens when we become prosperous and secure.

EVANGELISM DURING TRIB. The greatest evangelism and making of disciples will take place during the Tribulation, when the Antichrist and the spiritual wickedness that backs him is no longer leashed. Revelation 7 talks about a crowd of Saved Saints who appear before God's throne and the number is so large John isn't given one. Keep in mind John is given big number in Revelation, the largest being 200 million a few chapters later. Thus the gathering in Revelation 7 far exceeds 200 million, which is almost 2/3rds of the population of the US!

Verse 4 of 2 Thess 2: the Antichrist AND the spiritual wickedness that backs him opposes God, God's people, and look what's specifically pinpointed by Paul: worship. The spirit of Antichrist hates it when the Church worships God! What is the spirit of Antichrist trying to stop here in America? WORSHIP.

We will not be stopped! Fine us, put us in jail, take or destroy property—the Holy Spirit within these temples will NEVER cease to inspire us to cry out the name of Jesus Christ!

After the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, the Roman Empire tried to force the new Christian Church to appear before an idol of Caesar and declare him to be a god. It was a simple thing that took 5 seconds and everyone was required to participate. People would line up single file, approach the idol, bow to it and call it god, then move on. The penalty for refusing was death.

Consider: the 1st century Christians knew God wasn't going to swoop in and deliver them from having to make this terrible choice. They realized they were going to have to go through this and make a decision: 1) declare Caesar as a god and live or 2) refuse and be put to death. They chose Jesus, refused to bow to a false god, and were martyred on the spot.

What inspired them to "endure to the end?" What prompted them to be willing to lose their lives when a 5 second ritual would have saved them to live another day?

Answer: the Holy Spirit working IN them in the 2 Chronicles 7:14 fashion. We are equipped with the same Holy Spirit, but we need to be willing to allow Him to work with us. Are we willing or will we continue to be offended that He hasn't calmed the external storms and delivered us?

He has primed and equipped us for revival!!!!

