

BOOK ONE  
THE LAST SHAKING  
SERIES

**THE  
SHAKING  
OF THE  
NATIONS**

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**STUDY GUIDE**



# ***The Shaking of the Nations***

## **Small Group Handbook**

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***A Harvest tsunami is on its way.  
Will the church be ready?***

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# Introduction

*It is coming and nothing is going to stop it. The only question is whether you will be part of it.*

The greatest harvest in church history is in the making. It is being created as the hand of God increasingly shakes the nations. The purpose of this shaking — predicted by the Prophet Haggai long ago — is to cause millions to begin searching for the “unshakable life” that can only be found by faith in Jesus Christ.

Yet, many of God's people aren't ready for what this divine shaking will bring: a worldwide “tsunami harvest wave.” God is calling me and you to become His voice, and to prepare his Church for the coming challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities. I pray you will join me in obeying the Lord's voice and get ready.

God is awakening vast numbers of people to the precariousness of life. Multitudes are searching for meaning, stability, and hope in an increasingly frightening world. And we as God's people have good news for this hope-starved world. The place to start is to nurture within ourselves an expectant, unshakable faith in what God is ready to do, so we may seize the amazing opportunities that are coming.

More than ever, the Church needs a new paradigm of expectation and courage. God has called me to challenge the paradigms of escapism and defeatism. Contrary to what some mockers and pessimists are saying, the Church's most fruitful days lie ahead.

We must awaken to the amazing things that God is ready to do in anticipation of his Son's return to earth. For those with courageous faith, the best is yet to come!

## The Arm of the Lord

This small-group study guide will help you better understand the word that God has put in my heart to speak to His church. I have arranged the thirteen chapters of *The Shaking of the Nations* into six study sessions to take you deeper into the message.

*The Shaking of the Nations* is the first in a series of three books. It deals mainly with **attitude**. My hope is to convince God's people to have an attitude that is expectant and courageous, not fearful and defensive — certain that God will audaciously use them to bring in the greatest harvest in church history.

The second book will deal with **readiness**. So much of the Church is unready for what God is about to do. Scripture teaches that in the last days God will send his greatest revival to prepare the Church for this final harvest. There will be no "Plan B." God will use us, and no one else. We must not be caught unprepared.

The last book will deal with **mission**. The Church's readiness must center on its unity and its ability to disciple the coming harvest. We have to ground ourselves in who Jesus Christ is, and what He did for us on the cross. We must then do what He said to do in His training of the Church for the great commission. And we must unite the Church at city-wide levels to present the whole Christ to the whole world.

This is the A.R.M. (Attitude, Readiness, Mission) of the Lord that must be mighty in the last days.

*Awake, awake, arm of the Lord,  
clothe yourself with strength!  
Isaiah 51:9*



# SESSION ONE

## Chapter One

### Call to Awaken the Church

God is raising up prophetic voices to call the Church to renewal for the great climactic harvest. When he called me to this task, he gave me two key objectives for helping the Church prepare.

The first objective was to raise up a school of the prophets to spread this message around the world. The second was to build "arks" to mobilize city and national churches to form a united "container," one into which the harvest can flow without losing even one hungry or desperate soul.

For this to take place, every church and Christian group will need to unite their unique giftings and callings. Only together can we shepherd and disciple such a vast harvest. Walking in unity, on fire with revival, the Church will reveal the whole Christ and his amazing unshakable Kingdom.

In this first of three books, we will focus on establishing the fact of the coming harvest wave. Few believers will make sacrifices to prepare for something they are not convinced is coming. So, in this book we will look at three things: 1) How God will form this vast harvest through divine shaking and how He will use the church in it. 2) The definition of God's shaking, and what it will look like. 3) The call to the church to embrace this truth and commit to prepare.

### The Calling

When God gave me this message over 15 years ago, I did not fully understand what He was asking. The understanding came over time. Now my job is to help you understand this great calling, and to call you to join in taking this message out to the church and the world.

The message is this: God wants his church ready for the climactic ingathering of the lost of this world as we come to the end of this age. The greatest impetus for this harvest will be fueled by God's last "great shaking" of the nations. When the prophet Habakkuk became distraught over the injustice and violence in the world he cried out, "where are you God?" (Hab.1:2-4) The prophet could not see the hand of God at work at a time when God was needed the most. But God answered the prophet and said:

*Look at the nations and watch—  
and be utterly amazed.  
For I am going to do something in your days  
that you would not believe,  
even if you were told.  
(Hab.1:5)*

God was at work. God was shaking nations, raising some up and pulling others down. God was using the nations for his purposes. But the prophet needed God's help to see him at work. This is what God wants for us: to "Look at the nations — watch, and be utterly amazed."

Over the last two millennia God has been building his Church, making it ready for this time. The best is yet to come for those who will prepare.

### **Discussion One**

God has been busy and the Church has been growing. Jesus said the Church would begin as insignificant and unnoticed, but would end as a mighty worldwide force for the glory of God.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Matthew 24:14

Mark 4:26-32

Habakkuk 2:14; Isa. 11:9

Isaiah 61:1-3

Malachi 1:11

### **QUESTIONS**

- ◇ Is Jesus' prediction of a growing worldwide Church coming to pass? Discuss this as a group.
- ◇ From the scriptures above, do you see God planning a climactic witness of Jesus and his Kingdom on a global scale?

## **Discussion Two**

Jesus and Paul the apostle both point out that many in the last-days Church will not be ready for the return of Jesus or for the works that God will be doing. It is clear that God will need to revive his church and call it to faithfulness.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Matthew 24:12

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

Revelation 18:4-5

### **QUESTIONS**

- ◇ As a group, share how you see the condition of the Church today, or individually write out your thoughts.
  
- ◇ Spend some time in prayer, asking the Lord, "Am I ready?" If you feel comfortable sharing the answer, discuss with others in the group what you heard, and pray for one another. If you prefer to keep your answer private, or if you are not in a group, then express your thoughts to the Lord on paper.



### **Discussion Three**

The Lord will raise up a strong prophetic voice at the end of this age to awaken his Church to what he is ready to do. The end-times sending of the spirit of Elijah gives us hope that many will respond to the call for renewal just before the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Malachi 3:1-4; 4:5-6

Luke 1:16-17

Ephesians 5:14 (with quote from Isaiah 26:19)

### **QUESTIONS**

- ◇ John the Baptist was an expression of the Elijah spirit. Using the scriptures above, explain how you see the Elijah revival preparing God's people for the coming harvest and Jesus' return.
  
- ◇ Do you feel that the Lord is raising up a voice of renewal in the church today? Have you or any in your group sensed a growing need to call God's people to readiness? Could God be calling you?

## Discussion Four

God wants “arks” built: City-wide churches and Christian organizations united in framing a spiritual house to receive and disciple the coming great harvest. It is the united Church that will produce the “whole Jesus” for the world to see.

According to the apostle Paul, working at unity in relationship will cause greater spiritual maturity to come to the Body of Christ, as well as present a greater representation of the Lord. Only together can we hope to provide the many callings and giftings needed to disciple the huge coming harvest. (This will be covered more fully in the third book of *The Last Shaking* series.)

## REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

John 21:21-23

Ephesians 4:11-16

Luke 11:17

## QUESTIONS

- ◇ Did Jesus consider unity as vital to the Church’s witness to the world? Why, or why not?
- ◇ Is Paul saying in Ephesians that when God’s people work for unity it fosters greater maturity in them, and exhibits the whole Christ for the world to see? Explain in your own words.
- ◇ Is it important that the Body of Christ join together at city-wide levels to build spiritual “arks” to pastor and disciple the coming harvest?
- ◇ How could God use *you* to foster unity in your city?

## SESSION TWO

# Chapters Two - Three

## The Shaking of Heaven and Earth

### The Promised Shaking

God brought two divine shakings in history. The first created the nation of Israel, which was his witness to the surrounding nations at the time of the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt. The next shaking began at the first coming of Jesus Christ and has continued to this day.

This second ongoing shaking has produced a worldwide witnessing Church — offering a universal covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ for all who will receive it. This second shaking will crescendo into the last great shaking of the nations and culminate in the second coming of Christ.

I want to divide the divine shaking into two parts. The first is the shaking of the earth with its people and nations. The second is the "shaking of the heavens" — involving more than frightening events in the heavens that are signs of Christ's return. The heavenly shaking also deals with the victory that Jesus has given his Church over all spiritual forces.

## **Discussion One**

The shaking of the earth will do two things. It will stir up the nations and it will impact the house of God. People will “look for the desire of all nations.” (Hag.2:7) I believe this will be a hunger and search for the unshakable life in Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:26-28) The second result of this shaking will be to produce a church filled with God’s glory, which will attract the spiritually broken and hungry of the world.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Haggai 2:6-7, 9

Hebrews 12:26-28

Isaiah 61:1-3

Joel 2:28-32

Acts 2:17-21

(This deals with the reviving and empowering of the church to be ready to offer the plan of salvation to the nations.)

### **QUESTIONS**

- ◇ What should our attitude be toward the coming shaking of the nations?
- ◇ Explain what “shaken lives” will look like, so that we can be ready to reach out to these people?
- ◇ Are you ready to live out an unshakable faith in the days ahead?

## Discussion Two

What will this earthly shaking look like? The best picture we have of the climactic shaking of the nations is found in predictions by Jesus and the apostle John. A close look at both Jesus' and John's words reveals the same basic scenario for how God will allow the world to be shaken.

In considering John's seven seals in the book of Revelation, I focused on the first six. If you carefully read John's description of the first six seals you will see that they parallel Jesus' six predictions in His Mount Olivet discourse. I encourage you to read the Appendix at the end of this study booklet. As you read the two descriptions you will notice the common themes of deception, wars, famine, persecution, and environmental disasters — along with world evangelism.<sup>1</sup>

### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Matthew 24:3-14

Revelation 6:1-11

### QUESTIONS

- ◇ What should our attitude be as we see these shaking events? Should we simply say, "I knew this was going to happen," or instead be ready to meet both physical and spiritual needs with a message of hope?
- ◇ How can we encourage one another to live out an unshakable life in the face of these world-shaking circumstances?

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus describes this last shaking as "birth pangs" (Matt. 24:8). Birth pangs give us a good understanding of the divine shaking process over the last two millennia. It means the shaking will increase in "frequency" and "intensity." We are moving toward a culmination that will confront the nations and challenge the throne of antichrist himself. (Rev. 16:10)

### Discussion Three

Preparing his Church to face traumatic world events, Jesus teaches us, "In patience possess your soul." What he means is that during any crisis we are to trust in God's protection and shepherding. God will also give wisdom for how to stay clear of unnecessary danger. Above all, Jesus stresses that we must be spiritually awake in prayer, and keep our focus on him.

### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Luke 21:18-19, 21

Mark 13:35-37

Ephesians 5:14-17

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8

### QUESTIONS

- ◇ As the worldwide shaking events increase, where are most people likely put their focus? Where does Jesus tell us to keep our focus? Why?
- ◇ What does it mean to "stay awake" spiritually? Are you spiritually awake?

## **Discussion Four**

We notice in all three gospels that record the Mount Olivet discourse, Jesus mentions the sign of the "fig tree." This sign seems to be a key indicator of when Jesus' predictions will come to fruition. The fig tree represents the restoration of Israel as a nation, and the renewed rule of the Jews over Jerusalem. (Jer. 24:2-9; Hos. 9:10) This sign is to help us know the times we live in. It is part of our "preparation" in moving us to readiness.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Matthew 24:32-33

Mark 13:28-31

Luke 21:29-30

### **QUESTION**

- ◇ In 1948 Israel became a nation again, after almost 1900 years. In the 1967 Six Days war, Israel regained control of Jerusalem. In light of what Jesus says in the scriptures listed, what should our attitude be toward these two events? What should they stir us to do?



## SESSION THREE

# Chapter Four

### The Shaking of the Heavens

It is true that God will cause cosmic disturbances to alert the world to the imminent return of Jesus Christ. (Matt.24:29) But when the author of Hebrews writes, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also the heavens." he is not just referring to the sun, moon, and stars. (Heb. 12:26)

This author is addressing a "spiritual shaking" that will result in a spiritual revolution — one that will exalt Jesus and his Church to the highest place in the heavens. The apostle Paul is clear when he says that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus captured and openly paraded a defeated Satan and his host. (Eph. 4:8; Phil. 2:10)

### Discussion One

The heavenly shaking of God through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ destroyed Satan's position of power over humanity. This power position has been given to Jesus and his church.

### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Read Luke 10:17-19

Ephesians 1:3, 21; 2:6

Hebrews 1:3-4

Revelation 12:1-12

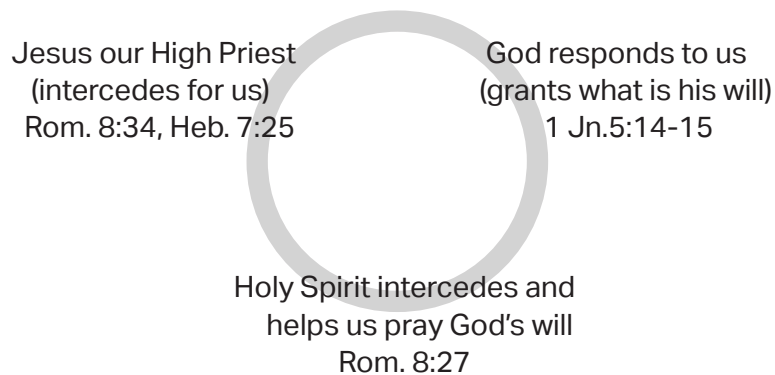
### QUESTIONS

- ◇ What does it mean for the Church (for us) to be seated with Christ in heaven at the right hand of the Father? Has God given us a position of power and influence with himself through Jesus?
- ◇ Review Matthew 16:18-19; 18:18-19. Is Jesus giving his Church authority to attack the spiritual strongholds of evil? Think of ways the Church might use this authority.

## Discussion Two

Having been raised up in Christ, to a position of heavenly authority in prayer, God's people can participate in the strategic shaking of nations. Christian prayer is very different from Old Testament prayer. We can pray the will of God down on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10) The church now has the power to "permit or prohibit" things on earth according to the will of God. (Review Chapter Four in *The Last Shaking*.)

### Cycle of Christian Prayer



### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Romans 8:27; 34

Hebrews 7:25;

1 John 5:14-15

Matthew 16:18-19; 18:18-19

### QUESTIONS

- ◇ Can you cite any testimonies of when you, or someone you know, used prayer authority to bring about change in the community, the workplace, or school?
- ◇ Think of ways that your church or group could shake things up in your city, neighborhood, or workplace with such a weapon of prayer.

### Discussion Three

The question might arise that if Satan has been “demoted,” why does he still have so much authority in the world? Scripture is clear that the lost remain in the grasp of Satan and his minions. (1 John 5:19)

Satan still seems to be able to resist the Church and its witness in many ways. Why is this true?

#### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 2:2; 4:27

Mark 3:24-25

Romans 6:16

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

#### QUESTIONS

- ◇ Using the scriptures above, discuss the list of “sins” that give Satan permission to resist and frustrate the work of the Church.
- ◇ Take time to quietly search your heart and see whether anything may have frustrated God’s work in your life. If you are comfortable sharing this process with the group, take time to “confess your sins” to one another — so you can be healed, and freed of Satan’s chains. (James 5:16) Or, write down what God is showing you about hindrances in your walk with him, and purpose to share this with your pastor or with a trusted fellow believer.

## SESSION FOUR

# Chapters Five - Eight

### The Great Harvest

The last two millennia have been the Age of Harvest. That age is drawing to an end – and a climactic harvest wave is building to sweep whole people groups into the Kingdom of God. Jesus' greatest focus was on "fishing for men" — that is, harvesting people into the Kingdom. Jesus built his life and that of his Church around the spiritual harvest.

### Discussion One

The definition of the spiritual harvest is the gathering of every man, woman, boy, girl, and Creation itself, into the Kingdom of God -- through faith in the message and work of Jesus Christ. God has always had it in his heart to bring fallen man, and Creation, back into a redeemed relationship with himself.

### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Genesis 3:15;12:3- 4

Matthew 9:36-38; Lk.10:2

John 4:31-38

Romans 8:19-22

### QUESTIONS

- ◇ What should be the paramount focus of the church? Why?
- ◇ Re-read the scriptures above. Did Jesus command us to pray that the harvest would become more ripe? What did he command us to pray for?
- ◇ How are you participating in the great harvest?

## **Discussion Two**

Jesus warns of harvest fields that will be unbelieving and resistant to the gospel. Jesus instructs his disciples on how to deal with these resistant fields. Consider the five things in Chapter Five that we must be sure to do when we face a resistant harvest field.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Matthew 10:14-15

Luke 10:10-16

### **QUESTIONS**

- ◇ Why is it important to be led by God into our harvest field?
- ◇ What should be our attitude when we experience resistant people or groups, despite the fact that Jesus clearly stated that the fields are ripe unto harvest?

### **Discussion Three**

The spread of the Church during the last two thousand years shows us that it is fulfilling Jesus' prediction of exponential growth. The Church has become a global religion, flourishing in almost every culture.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Isaiah 11:9

Habakkuk 2:14

Matthew 12:14

Mark 4:30-32

Acts 2:17

### **QUESTIONS**

- ◇ Are we to expect God to continue the exponential growth of the Church? Why or why not?
- ◇ Is the Church ready to receive and disciple this large, rapid growth? Why or why not?

## **Discussion Four**

In Chapter Six we are told that the key to Church readiness for the great climactic harvest is the last intense outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This will prepare the church for its role and the harvest field for harvest.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

Joel 2:23-32

Malachi 4:5-6

### **QUESTIONS**

- ◇ What do you think this end-times worldwide harvest-preparing outpouring of the Holy Spirit will look like?
- ◇ Write down ways that the Church should get ready for an increased outpouring of the Holy Spirit.



## Discussion Five

*A Continuous Harvest:* The prophet Amos indicates that when Israel resumes its nationhood, the Holy Spirit will produce such a ripe worldwide field that the Church will experience a continual harvest.

Amos prophesied the paradox of simultaneous sowing and reaping in the last days. Can you imagine the overwhelming challenge for the Church to handle such a vast increase in new converts?

## REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Amos 9:11-15

John 4:36

Revelation 14:14-16

## QUESTIONS

- ◇ Notice that Acts 15:16-17 already shows that Amos 9:11-15 is a last-days passage dealing with worldwide evangelism. The key for its activation is the settling of Israel in its land, never to be moved again. What would continuous sowing and reaping look like?
- ◇ When was the last time you made the effort to sow the gospel into the life of another? Should this become a priority for you?

## Discussion Six

*The Jewish Harvest:* The days are numbered in which the gentile Church will carry the full load of world evangelism. The "first fruits" of Israel will increasingly partner with the gentile Church to bring in the great harvest.

One of the four messianic servant songs in the book of Isaiah is Isaiah 49 — often quoted in the New Testament to reveal Jesus Christ as the coming Messiah. These New Testament quotes help us interpret Isaiah 49 as speaking to the work of the Church in evangelizing both the gentile nations and Israel in the last days.

God will increasingly empower the gentile Church to draw hundreds of thousands of Jewish people to faith in Christ. Christian groups and national leaders will participate in helping redeemed Jewish people to return to Israel to spark a national revival of faith in Jesus as Messiah. This "first fruits" movement of Israel will become a mighty resurrection witness to a watching world.

## REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 49:6 (Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47)

Isaiah 49:8-9 (2 Corinthians 6:2)

Isaiah 49:22-23 (compare to Isaiah 60:1-3)

Romans 11: 13- 15, 25-27

Revelation 14:3- 4

(144,000 are the "first fruits" — the beginning conversion of Israel, releasing it to help evangelize the nations)

## QUESTIONS

- ◇ In Isaiah 49 we see the Messiah coming to save both Jew and gentile. Notice in vs. 22 that God is going to use the gentile nations to bring back Israel's sons and daughters to help restore her. Does this picture "the fullness" of the gentile period being reached (Rom. 11:25-26), in which the gentile Church will no longer be the only evangelizing force in the world?
- ◇ Paul points out in Romans 11:15, as does John in Revelation 7:1-8, that these "first fruits" Jewish converts are going to be a "sign" to the world of the saving resurrection power of Jesus Christ in the last days. Do we not see Paul's prayer starting to be answered (Rom. 10:1), and the help of Jewish converts in finishing the great commission? With eyes on the Middle East today, share in your group how the conversion of hundreds of thousands of Jews would impact the world for Christ.

## SESSION FIVE

# Chapters Nine - Eleven

### God's End-Times Audacity

Has God been a passive participant in the age of harvest? Nothing could be further from the truth. He is becoming increasingly audacious in confirming the gospel and manifesting his Kingdom to the lost.

### Discussion One

*God's Audacious Suffering Love:* One of the most audacious manifestations of God's Kingdom and love for the lost is his willingness to sacrifice what he loves most — his sons and daughters — to share his message of love in a hostile world.

### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Romans 5:3; James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 1:6-7

1 Peter 2:19-21; 1 Peter 3:9; 4:1

Revelation 7:13-17

(Notice that this suffering multitude became an uncountable number of saved and witnessing people through the tribulation).

1 Peter 4:12-14

2 Corinthians 12:10

### QUESTIONS

- ◇ Using the verses you just studied, explain what righteous suffering should produce in us.
- ◇ What does Peter mean that God "rests his glory" upon his suffering saints? In other words, how can God use our suffering to witness to others?
- ◇ Share or write down how God has used righteous suffering in your life.

## Discussion Two

*God's Audacious End-time Witness:* Revelation's audacious story of the two prophetic witnesses rivals some of the most dramatic miracles in the Old Testament. These two witnesses highlight one of the greatest moments of outreach and renewal of the Church in the last days.

We see the measuring of the temple as a prophetic reference to the restoration of the end-times Church, preparing it for the events of the last days. It appears that the two witnesses will be a source of renewal for the Church. Notice how measuring God's house or people points to coming renewal. (Ezek. 40; 41; Zech. 4:10; Rev. 21:15)

Several stories found in the Old Testament are amplified and brought together in the ministry of these two witnesses. God will allow the witnesses to enjoy worldwide power and communications for three and a half years. The church will be strengthened by them, and the wicked will be tormented by them. There will be few if any atheists left in the world.

Then the two witnesses will be dramatically killed by antichrist, and the wicked will savor a moment of victory – only to be forced to watch the witnesses' resurrection with shock and fear. Many will finally bow the knee, give glory to God, and believe.

## REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Revelation 11:1-12

(Remember that so long as one person can be saved, receive Christ as Savior, and be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Church will remain on earth.)

## QUESTION

- ◇ Why would God allow such an audacious display of his power at a time when Antichrist is trying to rule the earth?

### Discussion Three

*The Gospel Angel and Friends:* The most audacious last-days manifestations of God's Kingdom will be the witness of the three angels who will preach the gospel to the cities of every nation, tribe, and language.

The three gospel angels are one of God's most extraordinary expressions of audacious love to a lost world. Antichrist may try to keep their appearances off TV, but they will be seen – and heard. Only the most hard-hearted sinners will reject this final appeal to receive Jesus Christ as savior.

The apostle John shows plainly that many will be converted by the dramatic impact of the two witnesses and the three angels. But we must appreciate that, behind the scenes, God will be planting churches, raising up pastors, and sending apostles, prophets, teachers, and evangelists to disciple multitudes of new believers.

Today we should be encouraging a bold, expectant faith in what God is ready to do. The Church will face a great test of endurance, but likewise it will find its greatest harvest opportunities. This is the time to ask for "spiritual eyes to see God at work," and faith to join God in that work.

### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Revelation 14:6-12

Revelation 15:2-3

John 5:19-20

### QUESTIONS

- ◇ Try to picture entire cities reacting to angelic preaching. Will we need "boots on the ground" to follow up on such a dramatic presentation of the gospel? How would you react? Try to develop a group strategy for how a city church might respond to such an event.
- ◇ Do these angels succeed in their evangelism? (Re-read Rev. 15:2-4)
- ◇ Do you agree that God is increasingly becoming audacious as the end times approach, creating a need for believers to in turn become more audacious in their faith? Why or why not?

SESSION SIX

## Chapters Twelve - Thirteen

### Building Audacious Faith

If God is becoming more and more audacious in his Kingdom witness, then as his people we must develop an audacious faith. We must be convinced that God is ready to amaze us, so that we will not balk when he challenges us to believe him for what may seem impossible things. (Jeremiah 33:3)

#### Discussion One

*It's Later Than You Think:* Jesus instructed the Church to teach the "signs" of his coming, so that God's people might live "ready, unafraid, and victorious" lives at the end of this age. Consider the signs listed below in scripture.

#### REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

The rebuilt temple: 2 Thess. 2:3; Matt.24:15; Mk.13:14

The falling away: 2 Thess. 2:10-11; 2 Tim.4:3-4

The revealing of antichrist: 2 Thess. 2:3;

The gospel into every nation: Matt.24:14; Mk.13:10

The first-fruits harvest of Israel: Rev.14:4b; Rom.11:25

Preparing the church: Matt.24:6; Mk.13:23; Matt.28:20; Mk.16:20; Matt.10:23

#### QUESTIONS

- ◇ Discuss the purpose of Jesus' signs. How can seeing the fulfillment of these prophecies help the Church in its preparation for the coming harvest?
- ◇ Jesus is clear that as the Church sees these signs come to pass, we must react in very specific ways. Discuss the responses that Jesus wants his Church to have.

## Discussion Two

The church must move from little faith to great faith! God is ready to reach whole nations. Now is the time to refuse to set limits on what we believe He can do. Growing faith does not always see how to accomplish what God is asking -- but it does act on the little that it understands.

## REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES

Mark 4:40; Matthew 14:29-33; Luke 7:6-9

Romans 4:18-24

Hebrews 11:1,6

## QUESTIONS

- ◇ Review the "three kinds of faith" in Chapter 12. In what category would you place your own faith today? Share or write your answer.
- ◇ Share or write down times when you have witnessed audacious faith in others, or have expressed it yourself.
- ◇ Share or write down ideas on how members of your group might seek to "grow" greater faith.



### **Discussion Three**

Building great faith is part of the Church's preparation for revival and harvest. Like the "Ditch Diggers Fellowship," we must begin audaciously thinking about creating spiritual "ditches" (churches, schools, ministries, organizations) to receive the ripe harvest that God will send to be pastored and disciplined.

### **REVIEW THESE SCRIPTURES**

2 Kings 3:16-18

Jeremiah 29:11-13; 33:3

### **QUESTION**

- ◇ What has God put on your heart through doing this study? Do you feel that God has spoken something he wants you to do? How might you "dig a faith ditch" to get ready for what God is impressing on your heart? Discuss this with your group or write out your thoughts.

## CONCLUSION

# **A Net-breaking Harvest**

(LUKE 5:4-11)

An unimaginably vast harvest lies ahead. But God will only use harvesters who have made themselves ready. It is God's desire to make his Church an "unshakable, empowered, audacious, and ready people."

It is time to awaken to the opportunities that God will bring our way. Spread the word! God is moving to revive his people and harvest the nations.

## APPENDIX

# The Coming shaking is Redemptive

The divine shaking of the nations, as seen in the six seals and the Mount Olive discourse, is not so much God creating disasters, but rather God stepping back and allowing the consequences of personal and national sins to run their course. Yes, God will cause events that will bring people and nations to perplexity and distress. But if we look carefully, we will see that the predictions of Jesus and the apostle John deal more with the consequences of national sins than with divine agitation.

James states that war comes from our evil and selfish thinking and desires. (James 4:1) And war is one of the major causes of disease and famine.

Persecution is not a divine issue but, again, a human action. And even many of the natural disasters we see today can be attributed to human causes. Many believe that the origing of global warming is to be laid at our doorstep. Bad farming techniques and abuses of water are a major cause for the expansion of deserts and wastelands. Uncontrolled population growth also contributes to hunger and squalor.

When God created man he called him to be a "steward" over creation. (Gen. 1:28) We are responsible for what God gave us.

Much of the coming shaking is our sins catching up with us. In many ways, God is simply allowing us to "reap what we are sowing." (Gal.6:7-8) No longer is God holding back the consequences of our selfish actions toward the earth and one another.

Yes, he will use his shaking of the heavens as a sign to perplex the nations. But never doubt that the central purpose behind the divine shaking is redemptive.

Like Israel in the Old Testament, we are being allowed by God to "stew in our juices" — until more and more realize the need to turn to him. Millions are growing ready for this "turning."

The church must be ready to receive them.

## NOTES

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