

PREVAILING OR PROPHETIC?

The Generational War for the Soul of the Family

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In every generation, the Lord establishes His plans and purposes. In times of pressure or peace, the people of God are invited to lean in, and gain understanding to further the narrative of Lord in their generation.
- B. Generally, there are two colliding narratives within the cultural conversation – I’m calling them the *prevailing narrative* and the *prophetic narratives*. The **Prophetic Narrative** are those events and trends by which God instructs the nations, calls His people into deeper intimacy, rescues them from a lukewarm spirit of compromise, and establishes His purposes. These are initiated by God. The **Prevailing Narrative** is the contemporary, worldly view by which people make sense of events and trends and act upon them accordingly.
- C. It is very often that the *prophetic* narrative is not the *prevailing* narrative. Meaning, many people wrongly interpret events and trends and miss the response needed. Also, it is very often that the *prevailing* narrative is wrongly labeled the *prophetic* narrative.
- D. The deceptive prevailing narrative at the end of age is going to cause an increase of *fear, offense, betrayal, and lust* to rise to unprecedented proportions. Within that context the Lord has ordained the purifying and salvation of His family. The “turning of hearts” will occur in the hour where hearts are turning *against* one another in a demonic wave of offense and betrayal.

*“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.”
(Matthew 24:10)*

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet [forerunner ministry] before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, (Mal. 4:5, 6)

- E. The Church is to be a prophetic people. Her convictions are not established from prevailing opinion, but from the Word of God.

II. THE LORD JUDGES NATIONS AND CORRECTS HIS PEOPLE

- A. There are dimensions to the redemptive judgement of the Lord – man’s wrath is not like God’s wrath (James 1:20). The reason that God judges is to remove the hindrances of sin and compromise that obstruct people from loving, obeying, and enjoying Him.
 - 1. He judges the unrighteous – “...*For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*” (Is. 26:9). Here, the Lord uses power to instruct the nations in His ways; His ways are life. It’s a manifestation of mercy that the Lord would sound an alarm so that the nations don’t continue in ignorance.



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2. He disciplines *His people* - ¹⁷ ***For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)***

For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.
(Heb. 12:6) [His chastening is a sign that we've been received as sons]

B. We must understand the principles of God's narrative for at least 3 reasons:

1. To remain *faithful* to Him.
2. To *participate* in God's unfolding purposes (as opposed to observing).
3. To be a *faithful witness* to others.

III. ISAIAH 8 INTRODUCTION:

¹¹ ***For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying: ¹² "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. ¹³ The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow [call Holy]; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. ¹⁴ He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken." ¹⁶ Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples. ¹⁷ And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him. (Is. 8:11-17)***

- A. This important chapter delivers key principles into the tension between the *prophetic narrative* and the *prevailing narrative*.
- B. Brief overview: Isaiah has had his holy commissioning encounter with Yahweh in chapter 6, the agenda of heaven for the "***whole earth to be full of His glory***," and what is required in messaging, judgment, and God's dealings with Israel and the nations (Is. 6:6-13).
- C. The prophetic message Isaiah receives is very sobering; the expanse of the Yahweh's plan shows the great depth of man's sin and deception and therefore, what is necessary within His justice to bring about the necessary agreement with His ways.
- D. This sets the backdrop for what we are examining in chapter 7 and 8. Israel and Judah are on the tail-end of a time of great prosperity. Judah, the southern Kingdom, is surrounded by enemies plotting its demise – the *Davidic promise* is threatened to be cut off. Key figures: Prophet Isaiah, King Ahaz (Judah), Rezin [S.E. coalition], king of Assyria.
- E. God's people are surrounded by a multitude of enemies and key pressures:
 - Embroiled in a civil war that was nearly 200 years old
 - Philistines threaten on the west
 - Edom threatens from the south
 - Surrounded by a growing world superpower: Assyria
 - Prevailing narrative [a conspiracy]: The northern Kingdom, Israel (Ephraim) has entered a coalition with Syria [Syro-Ephraimite coalition] because Judah has adopted a pro-Assyrian



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stance. To thwart off any challenges, these two micro-powers are conspiring against Ahaz (Judah) to cut him off and replace him with a ruler of their own choosing (Tabel; Is. 7:5, 6).

- F. Isaiah had given Ahaz and Judah the *Immanuel* prophecy (vs. 7:14, 8:8)—“*God is with us.*” A reassurance that deliverance comes from the Lord not from man. King Ahaz, rather than heeding the voice of the Lord and seeking Yahweh for deliverance will make an alliance with Assyria to deliver them from the northern Syro-Ephraimite coalition.

IV. PEOPLE DON'T WANT PROPHETS (IS. 8:6-8)

⁶ “Inasmuch as these people refused the waters of Shiloah that flow softly, and rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah’s son; ⁷ Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River [Euphrates], strong and mighty—the king of Assyria and all his glory; He will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks. ⁸ He will pass through Judah, He will overflow and pass over, He will reach up to the neck...[he] will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.^[g] (Is. 8:6-8)

- A. The softly flowing *waters of Shiloah* are a portrayal of the Lord’s mercy (salvation). Yet, this *gentle* mercy is rejected and the Lord will send the strong waters of the “Euphrates” upon them – Assyria.
- B. Judah will be flooded “*up to the neck*,” as the land will be overrun by Assyria.
- C. Judah was told “*Immanuel, God is with you! He will deliver!*” Yet the people rejected this word and sought their own deliverance. They feared man more than they feared God.

V. JESUS WILL RESCUE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR ENEMIES (IS. 8:9, 10)

⁹ “Be shattered, O you peoples, and be broken in pieces! give ear, all you from far countries. gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces. ¹⁰ Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak the word, but it will not stand, for God is with us [Immanuel].” (Is. 8:9, 10)

- A. As the wicked conspire against Yahweh’s people, they will be *shattered* and be *broken*. God allows this. The Lord will rescue His people from the lukewarm spirit, the destructive power of deception, and wicked powers.
- B. They *gird themselves* with schemes, power and might, but they will be *broken in pieces*.
- C. Their *counsel... will come to nothing*. The Lord traps the wicked in their own schemes. Certainly, the wicked are scheming and the evil one is promoting evil.
- He catches the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them... (Job 5:13)*
- D. Note how the Lord is correcting His people AND warning the wicked of their impending judgment *at the same time*.



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VI. PROPHETIC NARRATIVE (IS. 8:11-13)

¹¹ For the LORD spoke thus to me with a **strong hand**, and instructed me that I should **not walk in the way of this people**, saying: ¹² **“Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’ Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.** ¹³ The LORD of hosts, **Him you shall hallow** [call Holy]; let Him be your **fear**, and let Him be your **dread**. ¹⁴ He will be as a **sanctuary** [safety/deliverance], but a stone of **stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.** ¹⁵ And many among them shall **stumble**; they shall **fall** and be **broken, be snared and taken.**” (Is. 8:11-15)

- A. The Lord visits Isaiah with a ***strong hand*** – this speaks to the intensity needed to shift the thinking and perspective of the people.
- B. ¹² ***Do not say, ‘A conspiracy’*** - Isaiah is warned to not allow the *prevailing narrative* to dominate the conversation of the heart and the people of God; *even* his own conversation. The narrative *was true* and real, yet the Lord was after something deeper and more urgent. The conspiracy narrative propelled the people into **fearful** and **troubled** hearts. (Is. 7:2)
- C. ¹¹ ***...not walk in the way of this people*** – here, the prophet is commanded to *distinguish* himself from the people. It’s this distinguishing feature that adds *weight* to his words, without it, he is merely among those consumed with the helplessness of conspiracy. Their eyes are fixated on the present, problematic circumstance, but they can’t see the **greater trouble** that is at hand.
- D. ¹² ***Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled*** – the people are stricken with fear and troubled. Their fears are heightened because they’ve bought into the prevailing narrative.
 - 1. The *prevailing narrative of conspiracy* has entrapped them in the *fear of man*. It will cause them to **stumble** and **fall** (vs. 15)
 - 2. Whatever the people fear gains power over them. When we fear man, man becomes the solution.
 - 3. In the midst of pressure, Christ exhorts: ***“...See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.”***(Mt. 24:6)
“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. Jn 14:1
- E. ¹³ ***The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow*** – the Lord of hosts title places emphasis on the God commands the armies of heaven. He fights on behalf of the righteous and poor. *He is a man of war* (Ex. 15:3; Is. 42:13). The call to see Him as Holy hearkens to Isaiah’s previous vision in chapter 6. The declaration around the throne is the proclamation of His transcendence.
- F. ¹³ ***... let Him be your fear ...and your dread...***– the people of God must allow their fears to be *rightly directed*.
 - 1. Isaiah is saying that their conspirator isn’t Rezin or Assyria- it’s God!



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2. What the human heart fears gains power over it. To fear God means to allow God to have power over the soul.
 3. The fear of the Lord is clean. The heart comes under the authority of the scripture.
⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever, the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; (Ps. 19:9, 10)
 4. The Christian should not be concerned with what the world fears, but rather, the world should be concerned with what the Christian fears.
- G. *¹⁴ He will be as a sanctuary [safety/deliverance] – The Lord will dwell among His people (Ex. 25:8; Jer. 3:17; Rev. 21:3). He will be a shelter from the storm (Ps. 27:5; 91; Is. 4:5, 6).*
- H. *¹⁴ ...but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense – This statement is the picture when the people of God miss the prophetic plan. They're meant to identify the stone in front of them, but they are deceived and offended, stumbling over it. (Rom. 9:32; 1 Pt. 2:8)*
- I. *¹⁴ ... trap ... snare ... – the narrative becomes a trap and snare because God's primary emphasis is entirely missed. Some stumble and fall (depart from the faith) because their expectation and hope is wrongly directed. The Day of the Lord is referred to as a snare and thief to those unprepared (Lk. 21:35; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Pt. 3:10; Rev. 3:3, 16:15)*

VII. THE RESPONSE

- A. Shaking is present and escalating. What is the appropriate prophetic response?

¹⁶ Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. ¹⁷ And I will wait on the LORD, who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will hope in Him... ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there^[o] is no light in them. (Is. 8:16-20)

1. *¹⁶ ...seal the law among my disciples- a “seal” is a mark of unbroken authority upon an order. There is an urgent call for the disciples of the Lord to “seal” their hearts and mouths to the Word of the Lord.*
2. *²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! – the prophetic Word of God is the safe place for God's people in the midst of “many words” that are being spoken.*
3. *²⁰ If they do not speak according to this word ...there is no light in them – the prevailing narrative that did not include a turning to the Lord in repentance, the fear of the Lord, and the Word of God was darkness*
4. *¹⁷ I will wait on the LORD - Waiting is not passive, it is to engage a praying and watchful spirit with fasting. (Mk. 13:33; Lk. 21:36; Rev. 3:2; 1 Peter 4:7; Eph 6:18)*
³¹ But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; (Is. 40:31)



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5. To wait upon Him means to not look to man for salvation.
 - a. ¹⁷...***I will hope in Him*** – the hope of God’s people lies not in man.
 - b. We have *one hope*. It’s a biblical hope - stored up in heaven.

because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, (Col. 1:5)

- B. ¹⁴ ***Then He shall become a sanctuary*** - The Lord will be the shelter and shield His people when they fear Him. There is more at stake than losing opportunity, safety, money, rights, or position. He will their battles if they allow them. He will save them when they are patient and persevering.

⁵ For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.(Ps. 27:5)

1. The Lord wants His people anchored in the age to come.
2. Jesus sought to stabilize His disciples just prior to night of betrayal and the Cross by speaking of *His Father’s house*. Jesus, the Great Pastor holds the keys to overcoming a troubled and fearful heart.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (Jn 14:1, 2)

- C. He will send the Christ to destroy His enemies. The familiar passage of Isaiah 9 shines even brighter within its context.

³ You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy...⁴For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor... For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.(Is. 9:3-7)

VIII. CONCLUSION

1. The people of God must *distinguish* themselves - *salt and light* in this hour.
2. We must endeavor to trust and hope in Christ, knowing that we are citizens of another age. Our hope is not in man.
3. We endeavor to watchfully wait on the Lord in prayer and devotion, with fasting
4. ***“To the Word! To the testimony!”*** – we must, as Daniel in hostile Babylon, give ourselves to the prophetic scriptures.

