

The Greater Glory

Part 2 of a three-part series—A Word of Intention

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“Yet now, be strong, Zerubbabel,’ says the LORD; ‘and be strong, Joshua ... and be strong, all you people of the land ... and work; for I am with you,’ ... For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory ... The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

HAGGAI 2:4, 6-7, 9a

**God is shaking the nations,
and people’s hearts are
opening up to the Gospel.**

Notice verse six and the beginning of verse seven: **“For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations.’”** It’s interesting to look around and see what is happening all over the world—God is shaking the nations. Think of the natural disasters and the frequency with which we’re seeing these things happen today. Think of the social upheaval in the Middle East, how the whole demographic there is being rearranged. And there is also an economic upheaval, both in the U.S. and abroad.

We have the ongoing issue of global terrorism, wars, and famines; this is all a part of what God said would take place. He’s shaking the nations, and we should not necessarily expect things to get better. But God doesn’t want us living in our comfort zone, so we need to realize that things might not

get better socially, politically, economically, or even morally. If they do, praise the Lord! But even if they don’t, we shouldn’t be dismayed because we need to remember: God does His greatest work in times of distress, and we see that all throughout history.

Domestically speaking, the 1960s were a tumultuous decade for the U.S. socially. Three major political figures—President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert F. Kennedy—were all assassinated in the same decade. And then remember also what was happening: multitudes of young people—on the advice of Timothy Leary to turn on, tune in, and drop out—were eating LSD like it was candy, smoking dope around the clock, living on the streets, in the parks, on the beaches, having free sex, getting high on whatever was available. I remember those days. I was 13 years old in 1970, and I thought that the world had gone mad. It seemed like we were on the verge of anarchy. I remember being frightened at the way it seemed like everything that was stable and secure

was being shaken. But in the midst of that upheaval, what we now know as the Jesus Movement arose, and tens of thousands of those aimless teenagers became followers of Jesus Christ and had an impact on the direction of the culture.

As we see our culture going in a similar kind of direction today, so often we hit the panic button. But these things have never stopped the Gospel from going forward. In fact, quite often it’s in this context that the Gospel has a greater impact.

God says, **“I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations.”** The Rabbis said that this phrase, **the Desire of All Nations**, was a reference to the Messiah, and most Bible commentators agree. So contextually, this verse is saying that God is going to shake the nations, and people are going to come to Christ. We

see that happening. Patrick Johnstone, the author of *Operation World*, said in another book, “The 20th Century has been notable for terrible wars, famines, tyrannies, and immense natural catastrophes, yet it is these traumatic events that have contributed to the harvest into God’s kingdom. These negatives are an essential component. Somehow [God’s] redemptive purposes are worked out in love, but in the context of tragedies that open hard hearts and break down barriers to the gospel.” (*The Church is Bigger Than You Think*).

“One fact has become clear to me,” he said, “in my gathering of information from around the world, the sound bites and news flashes on our television screens do not tell the full story; God is doing an unprecedented work in our day, these mighty works are not in spite of the disasters but even because of them.” Think about the catastrophic typhoon in the Philippines; what is one of the outcomes of that? The church has come to the aid of the people. We have men and women on the ground right now building churches, preaching the Gospel, and helping people recover their lives. The same thing happened in Japan and Haiti, and with Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy. These tragedies opened up opportunities for God’s people to go in, but they went to people who were now receptive because everything they had trusted in was taken from them. Some estimate that 100,000 people come to faith in Christ each day and that more than 3,500 new churches are established weekly around the world.

God is pouring out His Spirit in these days. God is shaking the nations, and people’s hearts are opening up to the Gospel. We then have the opportunity to go in with the message of God’s love and grace. We pave the way through prayer, go in and do the work of evangelism, and then we disciple people. ✚

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh.”

ACTS 2:17a