

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-1008

Haiti Quake

January 20, 2010

The word for today and the days to come is **“Do not fear, but take courage.”** This was the title and subject of issue #04-1007, January 19, 2010.

In this issue, in light of the 7.0 earthquake that hit Haiti on January 12, 2010, I want to consider natural disasters from a spiritual perspective. It is quite telling how the world and its leaders view such things, with such a seeming lack of spiritual discernment.

Almost from the start, controversy rose up as a result of comments made by some prominent figures. Danny Glover, an actor, said the quake was the result of global warming and lamented over the failed attempt to get a global climate change treaty in Copenhagen, stating: “This is what happens.” Many commentators saw his comments as stupid and making no sense at all. I agree they made no sense, so I will leave it at this.

However, the greater controversy arose over a comment made by televangelist Pat Robertson. This is not the first time he has made controversial remarks about disasters or averting disasters, and not the first time he has been berated for such things. In this case, Mr. Robertson spoke of a pact the Haitians made with the devil in order to come out from under French rule. The response was venomous. Some called him a “demented old fool” with a “demented demonology,” “a nut job peddling an extreme right-wing worldview.” Even the White House weighed in by stating his comments were “utterly stupid.”

Is he a stupid old fool? I don’t think so, for **the fool has said in his heart, “There is no God”** (Psalm 14:1 NASB), and Pat Robertson knows and loves God and has devoted his life to serve Him. The true fool may be the one who calls him a “nut job.”

Mike Huckabee, a talk show host and former Baptist pastor, governor, and candidate for president, was more measured when he was asked his opinion as a pastor. He said that he respected Robertson, but his comments were way off base. Mr. Huckabee’s explanation for the quake is that we live in a broken world and bad things happen to good and bad people. For him, the issue is not why we experience such things but the faith we have to come through them, knowing that, when we hit the bottom, there is a firm foundation and that there is One greater than us and beyond us who loves us.

What he stated is true and I wholeheartedly agree with him, but I do not believe he went far enough in his response. In many respects, he gave the safe Christian response; one that avoids any appearance of judging and avoids presenting a Biblical view of judgment and spiritual conflict.

For those who understand something of spiritual warfare and the judgments of God, Pat Robertson’s comments were not so outlandish.

Natural disasters seem to hit with impunity, and surely the afflicted need faith, hope, and love to endure through them; yet, there may be reasons behind the disasters that can only be discerned in spirit. Consider the great flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, all of which could have been described as natural disasters, but who was behind them? God was! Add to this Paul’s exhortation that we are in a spiritual battle with the world forces of darkness (Ephesians 6:10-17) and that God is going to shake the heavens and the earth (Haggai 2:21-22; Hebrews 12:26), and we have a formula for what many call natural disasters or “acts of God.” There are dark forces in conflict with the kingdom of God, and mankind and nations are caught up in this great conflict that gets manifested in the physical realm.

We should not expect a world that largely views events through the prism of the physical realm and Darwinism to see behind events. So, when Pat Robertson or any other Christian offers a possible spiritual explanation, they are berated as stupid, foolish, even ignorant.

Now, returning to Haiti; the practice of voodoo among the Haitians is a well-known fact. According to Haitian history, the country was dedicated to Satan on August 14, 1791 by a voodoo priest and others who asked the devil to help them rid the island of the French. In return, they offered to give the country to Satan for 200 years. On January 1, 1804, they were liberated and the nation was born. It should be noted that prior to this birth, Haiti was France's richest colony but, with its independence, it soon slid into poverty to become one of the world's poorest nations and has continued so to our present day.

However, there is more to Haitian history that the media failed to report and, no doubt, would choose to ignore. On August 14, 1997, a number of Christian leaders came together to pray and fast to break the contract made with the devil, and they had evidence that they had succeeded. As they reported, it was a "historic victory over Satan." I don't know if Pat Robertson included this history in his comments, but I imagine it would have made no difference to a media that is anti-Christ in its worldview.

Interestingly, in 1991, 200 years after the contract was made with the devil, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a defrocked Catholic priest, became the nation's first freely elected president. By most accounts, he was a corrupt, evil leader. Unfortunately, he was supported by the US. On April 8, 2003, in an attempt to stay in power as his control over Haiti waned, Aristide made voodoo an officially recognized religion in Haiti and declared it a part of their national identity.

In essence, he attempted to renew the pact with the devil; however, his fate was sealed, for the victory over the contract with Satan had been won in 1997, and Aristide was ousted as president and went into exile in February 2004, exactly 200 years after Haiti broke free of French rule.

Aristide was overruled, for **the Most High is the ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes** (Daniel 4:32 NASB). **The heavens do rule** (Daniel 4:26 ASV)!

It is no coincidence that the period of 200 years appears twice in this history: 1791-1991 and 1804-2004. The number 200 signifies "insufficiency," which means "failure to perform its normal function." Truly, failure marks the history of this nation that God loves.

Now, some might wonder why Haiti continues to have such great poverty and, by most accounts, corrupt government, and why they were not fully released from their condition in 1997. As I am reminded repeatedly, we must **transcend time** when it comes to spiritual matters. It may take many years for what is bound and loosed in heaven to be fully manifested on earth.

But here is the good news: There is much hope for Haiti. Sometimes the only way to get free of something is for it to crumble into dust. Shackles have to be broken and fall off before we can move about freely. The Haitians need to be unshackled from what has bound them for so long so they can truly know freedom and become a fruitful nation once again. The destruction of the parliament and the palace, symbols of the seat of government and its corruption, may indicate that freedom is near.

The Revelation records a great earthquake that kills 7,000 people, but consider the result: **The rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven** (11:13). When the Lord spoke that He was going to judge His chosen people through a unique disaster (Ezekiel 7:5-13), He purposed that **"they will know that I am the Lord"** (Ezekiel 7:27). When disaster comes our way, especially when it comes for entire nations or regions, it is time to **"Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water"** (Revelation 14:7).

As horrible as this event is to the Haitians, it may be their best opportunity to rebuild and come out of their poverty. May they come into the riches of Christ and become a nation under God's King! May the whole nation come to know the Lord through this disaster, and may they give glory to God!