

*Johnny Hunt's President's Address***THE STATE OF OUR CONVENTION, FROM WHERE I SIT****2 Chronicles 7:12–16****Southern Baptist Convention, 2009****INTRODUCTION:***We see things not as they are, but as we are. —H.M. Tomlinson**Times are desperate, but we are not. —Vance Havner**You can teach what you know but you can only reproduce who you are. —John Maxwell**If you don't see it before you see it, you will never see it. —Author unknown**You can't teach people what they already know. It is like pushing a string. —Author unknown*

We are told that after Solomon dedicated the temple to Almighty God and the Ark was brought into the temple, **“the glory of the Lord filled the house of God”** (2 Chron. 5:14). The temple was full of the praises and thanksgiving of the people of God. The Bible says they **“were as one”** (13), and in that context the **“priests could not continue ministering”** (14). The true words of worship were simply, **“He is good.”** and **“His mercy endures forever.”**

Second Chronicles 7:12–16 is a record of the second appearance of the Lord in the presence of Solomon. On the first appearance, found in **2 Chron. 1:7–12:**

“On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, ‘Ask! What shall I give you?’ And Solomon said to God: ‘You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?’ Then God said to Solomon: ‘Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king—wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like.’”

1 Kings 3:13: And I have also given you what you have not asked.

One thing is for sure, **to whom much has been given, much will be required.**

At the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, we will have to give an account of what we have done with what He has given us.

What a challenge for a Christian and, yes, for a pastor or spiritual leader.

NOTE: The parallel of this truth to that of the New Testament Church.

I. THE PROMISE. Verse 12

I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

He came into the temple and took up residence. Today, He does the same thing, only He promises to never check out; my heart is not a hotel!

2 Chronicles 7:16: For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

“We Wear His Name” – by NewSong*We wear His name, the name above all names.**We wear His name, in a world that's lost in hopelessness**We've been called to be the light**We wear His name.***2 Chronicles 7:12: There will I make myself known, and there will I be called upon.****II. POSSIBILITY. 13**

The Lord speaks of agricultural curses. It is His way of dealing with their disobedience. How does this relate to the New Testament church?

The point is that God uses external events to bring us to a point of humility and to remind us that He has Sovereign control over our lives, and to remind us that it is to Him that we owe everything.

Questions:

- Could it be, perhaps, that He is using the economic turmoil to turn us back?
- Have the financial surpluses of yesteryear caused us to act unfaithfully?
- Has the declining health in America become an indication that we have lost self-control and that we have been given over to greed and gluttony of food?

1 Peter 4:17: 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?)

ILL. 9/11 - Economic Downturn - Not for America, for the Church!

“Shut up heaven” – Cause: UNFAITHFULNESS! DISOBEDIENCE.

Malachi 3:10: If I will not open for you the windows of heaven...

CAUSE: FAITHFULNESS! OBEDIENCE

Chapters 1 & 2 deal with the *Leaders – Priests*

Chapters 3 & 4 deal with the *Laity – People*

Malachi 1:13: “You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at it,” says the LORD of hosts. ‘And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?’ Says the LORD.”

They were giving the Lord their leftovers. Heaven was shut up and literally went “off the air” 400 years ago.

III. THE PROMISE AND PROVISIONS. Verse 14 deals with:**A. RELATIONSHIP.****“If My people who are called by My name”**

1 Peter 2:9–10: But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Speaks of a judicial right of possession. When property is transferred from one party to another, the name of the new owner is called out over the property.

“called by My name” – includes the concept of character, personality, etc., and one’s name was considered their most treasured possession. God is staking the integrity and character of His name on the peoples He has chosen.

B. RESPONSIBILITY.

“will humble themselves” – the constant acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty over all of life and the confession of our dependence, and the vow to live in continual denial of ourselves and our selfish ways.

Opposite of ***pride*** – God sets Himself against people of pride.

Only ***one thing*** worse than PRIDE: being prideful and not knowing it!

1. ISSUE – PERCEPTION: Verse 17**Laodiceans, Rev. 3:14–22**

America was reminded of an almost forgotten word in the National Spelling Bee. A 13 year-old Kansas girl spelled **LAODICEAN** to become the nation’s spelling champion. Most reporters didn’t know the word is found in the Bible. Charles Gibson, of ABC News, said, *“I’ve never heard that word “Laodicean” means lukewarm or indifferent in religion.”*

This church had grown ***proud, passive, and powerless*** in a world of wealth and wickedness. This church had become indifferent to their culture and had compromised their mission.

Revelation 3:15–16: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.”

This church was comfortable, complacent, and did not realize its need. Speaks of a condition of apathy or indifference; without enthusiasm. It is criticism without compassion. They were self-centered, self-occupied, self-satisfied, self-sufficient, and self-confident.

2. NOTE: JESUS’ PERCEPTION. Verse 17

“do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.”

Wretched – callous

Miserable – pitiable

Poor – spiritual poverty, pauper

Blind – nearsighted; they could not see beyond themselves

Naked – actual poverty; not clothed with righteous acts

Uzziah – God helped him until he became strong. **2 Chronicles 26:15: ...for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.**

3. JESUS’ PROVISION. Verse 18

“I counsel you to buy from Me”

a. RICHES.

“gold refined in the fire” – calls for a restoration of ***spiritual values***. They are purchased ***only*** by repentance and yieldedness to the Spirit of God. **“Fire”** may suggest persecution. God uses it because nothing makes God’s people examine their position and priorities faster than suffering.

1 Peter 1:7: That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

b. RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“white garments” – speaks of God’s righteousness and grace; **spiritual virtues**

Revelation 19:8: And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

- At *salvation* Christ's righteousness is imputed to us.
- In *sanctification* Christ's righteousness is imparted to us, made a part of our character and conduct.

c. RESTORATION.

"anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see" – They had lost their *vision* and *perception*.

Proverbs 29:18: Where there is no revelation (vision/dream), the people cast off restraint...

These people could not see themselves as they really were.

REMEMBER: *We see things not as they are, but as we are.*

EXAMPLE: John 9 – Jesus with blind man at Pool of Siloam. He *irritated* him before He *illuminated* him.

Hebrews 12:5–6: "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.'"

Saddest part of the church without perception (vision)

Revelation 3:20: Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Jesus is outside the church, standing, knocking, hearing, opening, coming in, dining, reigning (20–21).

C. RESPONSIBILITY LEADS TO RESPONSE.

Praying, seeking, turning: 2 Chronicles 7:14

1. PRAYING.

The Bible and the record of history reveal there has never been such a thing as a prayerless revival. —Dr. Louis L. King

The church is dying on its feet because it is not living on its knees. —Leonard Ravenhill

Humble means "to bend the knee."

To "pray" – to judge self habitually.

Puritans – constantly rechecking their motives. God is positioned in mercy, waiting for His people's obedience.

2. SEEKING.

"seek my face" – His presence/person as opposed to His provision. Desiring the *Blesser* instead of the *Blessing*. Speaks of persistence.

3. TURNING.

"turn from your wicked ways" – Wicked here refers to anything opposite of God's way. This would also be following a path in which we are seeking out our own ways. It is not only necessary that we must turn from ways that are immoral, but also ways that are not in accordance with God's perfect plan and His perfect will. We can categorize wicked as something really awful and just say, "*Well, I don't do anything wicked.*" But here, the very fact that we are opposing God's perfect way is wicked, even if that action doesn't make our list of what we consider to be wicked.

"then" – Then and only then! **TURN!**

D. REPENTANCE LEADS TO REJOICING.

Hearing, forgiving, and healing come from praying, seeking, and turning.

What a Promise:

If God's children (His people) will come back to Him with their whole hearts in genuine repentance and faith, we will see our nation impacted for and by the glory of God. We need that kind of revival.

This kind of revival would lead to a **GREAT COMMISSION RESURGENCE**.

1. IT NEEDS TO COMMENCE IN OUR CHURCHES.**a. Pulpits First**

b. Pews--There is gold in them there pews.

2. IT NEEDS TO CONTINUE IN OUR CONVENTION'S AGENCIES.

- ♦ Local Associations
- ♦ State Conventions
- ♦ National Offices
- ♦ Seminary Campuses
- ♦ NAMB
- ♦ IMB

3. IT WOULD CLIMAX IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

- *What if every individual took a close look to see if we are doing the best we can do with all He has given us?*
- *What if every pastor (regardless of the size of his church) saw his church as a missionary sending unit?*
- *What if every pastor saw his church as a church-planting church?*
- *What if we all did our best to reach the "lostness" of our world?*

EXAMPLE: IMB Trustee

- *The shortness in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is not about paying the staff, it is about reaching the "lostness" of the nations.*
- *We have 16 million who need to be mobilized to the world.*
- *Pastor, whatever is important to you is important to them.*

LAST OF ALL: If we commit greater amounts to *Reaching the Nations, Church Planting in America, and Intentional Evangelism in our nation*, the CP will rise in such a way that we will think it was the Cooperative Program Resurgence instead of the Great Commission Resurgence. We do not have a money problem, we have a **VISION PROBLEM!**

LET'S GET BACK TO TELLING THE STORY!

—from the office of Johnny Hunt