

**THE SKY IS FALLING**  
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Matthew 13:31-32

1. Most of us are familiar with the story of Chicken Little who, when an acorn fell on his head, panicked and thought his world faced a crisis because he believed that the sky was falling.
2. He set off to inform the king, convinced a few of his friends to accompany him, all or some of whom got eaten by a fox depending on which version of the story you read.
3. A crisis can be real or imagined, but every crisis presents an opportunity for someone to use the crisis to advance their agenda and benefit financially.
4. Crises, real and imagined are used to manipulate people and to move them to support various movements; some political, some social, some environmental, and some spiritual.
5. To illustrate, about ten years ago I received some alarming news from an organization called Battle Cry Leadership Summits.
4. On the front of the brochure was this alarming statement: “Wake up call, Christianity in America won’t survive another decade (ten years) unless we do something now.”
5. On the inside of the brochure I found out that, according to this organization, if current trends continued only 4% of current teenagers would be evangelical believers by the time they became adults.
6. At the same time I was told that only 34% of adults were evangelicals, and that we were on the verge of a catastrophe.
7. Now the consequences of this catastrophe would be:
  - a. Dwindling church attendance.
  - b. A drastic drop in tithes and offerings.
  - c. New church buildings would sit empty.
  - d. Life giving sermons would go unheard.
  - e. The role of a church leader would become irrelevant.
8. The way to help avert this catastrophe was for me to give three hours of my time to attend a Wake Up Call conference where I would hear the top voices in the Christian community who would present the hard facts facing our culture and what we must do to reverse the terrible trend.
9. First of all don’t panic, because their prophecy has not come true, and I can assure you that the church in America will survive until Jesus comes.
10. It may not survive in its current form, but that could be a good thing since the church in its current form is not really impacting our culture.
11. We need to understand two important things about the church.

**I. The true church is made up of those who have genuinely repented towards God and embraced Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and that church will survive until Jesus comes.**

A. In Matthew 13 Jesus told a series of parables that described what the kingdom of heaven (the visible church) would look like.

1. In the Parable of the Sower Jesus taught that not everyone who outwardly embraces the Gospel will really do so, and that time and circumstances will demonstrate who has and who has not become a genuine believer.

2. In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares Jesus declared that the membership of the visible church would be made up of wheat (genuine Christians) and tares (people who look like Christians but are not).
  3. In the Parable of the Mustard Seed our Lord taught that the visible church would be like a great tree attracting all sorts of birds to its many branches.
  4. In the Parable of the Dragnet Jesus taught that the gospel net would gather fish of every kind and that some of those fish would be good and some would be bad.
- B. What many of our evangelical leaders do not want to accept is the fact that the evangelical church in America may contain more tares than wheat.
- C. The reason it may contain more tares than wheat can be traced to several factors.
1. Many, in their zeal to make converts, have removed the offense of the Gospel.
    - a. Most approaches to soul winning mention sin and the need for repentance, but the issues of human depravity and an offended God are not forcefully driven home less potential converts be offended.
    - b. Conversion cannot take place unless the Holy Spirit has convicted someone of the fact that they are sinners to the core, that no level of human righteousness can suffice, and that they face certain judgment unless they repent and embrace Jesus Christ for all the Bible declares Him to be.
    - c. Without genuine repentance towards God there can be no true conversion.
  2. Another factor is that Jesus is no longer the main attraction because the church has gone to ridiculous lengths to compete with this present world.
    - a. Why wouldn't people want to be a part of a church that has professionally choreographed worship services, uplifting, positive messages with little mention of unpleasant topics, exciting programs and ministries, state of the art sound systems and graphic presentations, coffee shops, gymnasiums, fitness programs, and just about anything else an individual or family could want.
    - b. I do not believe that God ever intended the church to become what it has become in America.
- D. Jesus described this period in church history in His message to the church at Laodicea found in Revelation 3:14-22.
1. Lukewarm.
  2. Deceived.
  3. Spit out.

## **II. The true hope for the church in America is not another conference.**

- A. What has to happen is that somewhere, some group of genuine Christians needs to meet God's conditions for revival and restoration.
- B. Those conditions are clearly stated in II Chronicles 7:13-14.
- “If I shut up heaven and withhold my blessings (my paraphrase) and my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”
- C. Now all over America there are groups of Christians earnestly praying for revival, so why aren't we seeing revival?
- D. I think the problem lies with our inability to recognize and turn from our wicked ways.
- E. Think about all the things that are seen as acceptable for Christians in our day that would have been seen as wicked (sinful) a hundred years ago. I'll just mention a few.

1. Our abuse of the Sabbath principle. Isa 58:13-14  
"If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure and speaking your own word, 14 then you will take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."  
NOTE: I am not suggesting a legalistic approach to what I call the Seventh Day Principle, but I am suggesting that Sunday should be the Lord's Day.

2. Our choices related to entertainment. Phil 4:8

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

3. Our attitudes towards immorality and humor. Eph 5:3-5

3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

4. Our fixation with pampering and adorning our bodies. 1 Peter 3:2-4

3 Your adornment must not be merely external — braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

NOTE: This admonition is addressed to women, but the principle applies to men and women alike. Many Americans, including many Christians, are obsessed with pampering their bodies, exposing their bodies, adorning their bodies, and decorating their bodies with body art (tattoos are condemned in the Old Testament law).

F. If we would see revival take place we must approach God with the attitude David approached Him with in Ps 139:23-24.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
24 and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

## **APPLICATION**

1. Bigger churches, more conferences, more rhetoric, more aggressive evangelism, more money or even more prayer meetings will not stop our spiritual and moral downward slide.

2. According to a study done by George Barna several years ago only 8% of the 34% of Americans who profess to be born actually have and live by what Barna called a biblical world view.

3. What has to happen is that genuine believers need to hear Jesus' words in Rev 3:20 and make Him the focus of our lives.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

4. Those believers then need to seek God together in prayer for revival while turning away from every hurtful way (hurtful in God's sight).

5. God will respond if and when we meet His conditions.