

THE RESPONSE

*A National Solemn Assembly, Houston, Texas*

A Prophetic Overview And Analysis

by

John Moore

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## Introduction

For the first time in the history of the United States a State Governor Rick Perry of Texas called for a National Solemn Assembly which was held on August 6, 2011 in Houston Texas at Reliant Stadium. The purpose was to fast and pray for our nation which is in crises. The invitation went out to all fifty governors to attend and at last count five accepted and five elected to call for assemblies in their own states. The reach was impressive when you consider that there were over 30,000 people in attendance and over 1,000 churches and groups gathered together participating by a live web stream, and over 80,000 individuals joined in from their own homes.

Such a call to prayer and fasting is not without historical precedence as assemblies and days of dedicated prayer and fasting have been called for in the past by Presidents and other Government officials including Abraham Lincoln and John Adams. The Bible contains many references where a nation was called to fast, pray, repent of sin and plead for mercy in the face of God's judgments as follows:

The nation of Israel:

Under Samuel - I Samuel 7:5-6

Under David — II Samuel 6:14 & I Chronicles 13-18

Under Asa — II Chronicles 15:9-15

Under Jehoshaphat — II Chronicles 20:3-13

Under Hezekiah — II Chronicles 29:5

Under Josiah — II Chronicles 34:31-33

Under Ezra — Ezra 6:16-22 & 8:21-23 & 9:5-15

Under Nehemiah — Nehemiah 8:1

Under Joel — Joel 1:13 & 2:12-17

Joel 2:12-17 was the main source text for the event.

## Highlights of the Assembly

### GOVERNOR RICK PERRY'S PRAYER DURING THE RESPONSE

"Lord, You are the source of every good thing, You are our only hope. And we stand before You today in awe of your power, and in gratitude for Your blessings; in humility for our sins.

Father, our heart breaks for America. We see discord at home. We see fear in the marketplace. We see anger in the halls of government. And as a nation we have forgotten Who made us, Who protects us, Who blesses us, and for that we cry out for Your forgiveness.

We pray for our nation's leaders, Lord — for parents, for pastors, for the generals, for governors — that You would inspire them in these difficult times. Father, we pray for our president, that You would impart Your wisdom upon him, that You would guard his family. We pray for our military and the families who love them. Father, especially for those special operators who lost their life yesterday in defending our freedoms.

You call us to repent, Lord, and this day is our response. We give it all to You. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen and amen."

### GOVERNOR RICK PERRY'S KEY STATEMENT DURING THE RESPONSE

Speaking of God's agenda Perry said, "His agenda is not a political agenda....His agenda is a salvation agenda." And then proceeded to separate God from politics and moved into citing the source text of the solemn assembly called for in Joel 2:12-17.

12 "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning;

13 And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness And relenting of evil.

14 Who knows whether He will not turn and relent And leave a blessing behind Him, Even a grain offering and a drink offering For the Lord your God?

15 Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,

16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and

the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber.

17 Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, Weep between the porch and the altar, And let them say, "Spare Your people, O Lord, And do not make Your inheritance a reproach, A byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?' "

### **Personal Experience**

#### Prayer Walk

Determined to pray for the event and obtain better insight I did a prayer walk around the stadium early on Thursday morning two days before the assembly. I began at 6:30 a.m. The first leg of the three mile circuit I was impressed by feeling all alone. I expected to have some encounter with others praying for the assembly but encountered no one else praying. At the moment I was aware of my aloneness I saw in the spirit a sight that both amazed me and relieved my sense of being alone. Hebrews 12:1 came alive with the sight of an immense company of saints.

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,"

They were all around me only at a distance. I could not discern their faces but the sense of their presence filled me with courage and affirmed my effort to pray. As I continued to walk on their presence diminished from sight as the following words from Psalm 106:1 became central in my thoughts... "for He is good and His mercy endures forever". I repeated this scripture over and over as I continued to walk and pray for the event. The entire circuit took me about one hour and when I was finished I was really encouraged because I sensed The Spirit of God was not only affirming but intimately involved in The Response.

#### The Event

My wife and I were honored to have Dave Kubal with IFA stay with us for the event. We arrived at Reliant Stadium shortly before 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. After clearing security and walking up the ramp into the stadium it wasn't till we entered the doors that I sensed the manifest presence of the Lord. I was moved in my spirit. We were seated in front of the

platform two rows behind the worship floor. It was a space without seating where people could stand or kneel before the Lord or sing and worship. The event began about 8:30 a.m. with an overview of the event and some ground rules to keep order in the service. When he was finished the music began with contemporary worship. There were no big names and no long speeches. There were several leaders coordinating the times of repentance, prayer, and worship. The areas of repentance flowed from personal to corporate and then on to national issues. A high point was when the church was called upon to accept responsibility for the dire state of our moral decline as a nation.

### **PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE**

Why did God choose Houston Texas as a place to call a solemn assembly? It could be that Houston most closely resembles Israel at the Time Joel recorded his vision, solemn words of warning and desperate call for Judah's repentance. Good evidence suggests a pre-exilic date for Joel's record in the mid to late eighth century B.C. while Assyria was in decline and before the rise of Babylon. During this period of time Israel and Judah were extremely prosperous and wealthy but strayed further from the Lord in the midst of their material blessing. Texas has been the brightest spot in the U.S. economy but is now feeling the effects of God's judgments in the form of drought, fire, famine and rapid decline in the price of oil from a global recession. God is taking issue with our Hypocrisy for it is no longer "In God We Trust" as stated on our currency but we boast in our own ability to produce wealth. Rick Perry alluded to this crisis in his address to the assembly. God is watching to see if we are serious about acting on our words or if we are only paying lip service to avoid the pain of judgment. God wants a heart change at the deepest level that is born out in our actions. In the book of Joel there are no less than 13 adjectives used to describe the condition of heart God is looking for. Lament, crying, weeping, howling, languishing, and anguish to name a few. We must allow God to break us and as intercessors begin to pray for God's heart and insight into our moral declension. Once we are in unity with Him and acting on His commands I believe we will see the rain return and the Blessing of our God will be experienced once again. If we fail to allow God to lead us through the process of repentance we can expect more severe judgments to come upon our nation. In the book of Joel the ultimate threat was war and bloodshed resulting in total domination and slavery by a foreign power. That happened to Israel and is an example to all nations who break covenant with Almighty God. The reality of that possibility is only as far away as the nearest mosque. The anarchy and spirit of lawlessness being experienced in other parts of the world will visit us here. We are not immune. As I write this I am reminded of the words that came to me on the prayer walk... "for the Lord is good and His mercy endures forever." God yearns to bless us so we need to continue in a true spirit of repentance and follow up with unwavering

obedience to experience once again the true joy of our salvation. Perry said it well, “God’s agenda is not a political agenda it is a salvation agenda”, a salvation that extends to the deepest and most ugly of our sins as God’s people and ultimately those of our nation as well.

After the event while driving away some raindrops showed up on our windshield. They seemed to fall from a cloudless sky. It had no effect on the drought but it revived a hope that God is willing if we are obedient. Perhaps that is the best prophetic perspective of the Response.

**WALK WITH GOD.**