
THE CHURCH IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

by Jonathan

WE ARE STEPPING INTO THE THIRD DAY

“And the LORD said unto Mo’ses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Si’nai” (Exodus 19:10-11).

“After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight” (Hosea 6:2).

“But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8).

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We are crossing into the early dawn of the third millennium since the time of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on earth. Without going into speculation or superstition about numbers, I believe something supernatural is about to take place in this new millennium. If the Bible is accurate in saying “that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8), then we are stepping into the “third day” (or third millennium) of the new covenant period. In many instances, the number “three” represents completion and consummation. In a concordance I looked into, the words “third” and “three” occur a total of 649 times in the Bible. Here are some examples:

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (1 John 5:7);

Jesus Christ was “...raised again the third day” (Matthew 16:21);

“And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected” (Luke 13:32);

“AND the third day there was a marriage in Ca’na of Gal’I-lee; and the mother of Je’sus was there” (John 2:1);

“Then on the third day A’bra-ham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off” (Genesis 22:4);

“AND it came to pass, when Da’vid and his men were came to Zik’lag on the third day, that the Am’a-lek-ites had invaded the south, and Zik’lag, and smitten Zik’lag, and burned it with fire” (1 Samuel 30:1);

“And this house was finished on the third day of the month A’dar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Da-ri’us the king” (Ezra 6:15);

“NOW it came to pass on the third day, that Es’ther put on *her* royal *apparel*, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, over against the

king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house" (Esther 5:1);

Moses and the people of Israel went "three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us" (Exodus 8:27).

Prophetically, I believe that just as the children of Israel were under bondage and wandering around the wilderness before they possessed the land, Christians have also endured much "crucifixion" by the world, the flesh and the devil for too long and it is about time that we rise up in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ to invade the enemy-held territory like never before! Like it was during the generation of Joshua, God is birthing a new breed of Christians in this hour of Holy Ghost power! He is calling His people to a higher level of commitment and consecration! He is looking for those who are circumcised in heart and spirit! He is raising up believers who are clothed in the fullness of His character, courage, charisma and covenant!

CHARACTER

"BLESSED *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planteth by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3).

"For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

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Character is having moral excellence, integrity, soundness, uprightness and virtue. The true measure of our character is the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:23).

Perhaps, we can also study the lives of different Bible characters to help us understand why many of them are great while others are infamous. We then apply the principles for success and avoid the pitfalls. Personally, I find the book of Proverbs full of instructions and wisdom in dealing with the more practical aspects of our behaviour and conduct, whether in private or in public.

In recent times, we grieve over the tragic failures and sins of a number of Christian leaders. It is time that we raise the standard of Biblical morality in the Body of Christ! We need to be men and women who are pursuing, preaching and practising holiness, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your

mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Je'sus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:13-16)!

In order for a restoration of character to take place, we must first receive the Spirit of holiness and the fear of the Lord, "HAVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1); "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24); "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Je'sus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thessalonians 3:13); "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

COURAGE

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee withersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).

"All the sons of Pe'rez that dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lem *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men" (Nehemiah 11:6).

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Courage is about being full of valor. Besides having moral virtue, God is seeking for valiant men and women who are fearless, fervent and forceful in spiritual intensity to advance the Kingdom, "And from the days of John the Bap'tist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). He is enlisting soldiers to join the army "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:33-34).

There are too many good, religious people who are living in false comfort and convenience, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:5). What we need is a company of warriors who will resist the approach of the enemy by faith in the power of the cross of Jesus Christ and His resurrection to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16). This means that we must be willing to live or die for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom, "According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death. For to me to

live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (Philippians 1:20-21); “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10); “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11). Catherine Booth (who co-founded the great missionary movement known as the Salvation Army together with her husband General William Booth) said it this way, “We want men who are set on soul-saving: who are not ashamed to let everyone know that this is the one aim and object of their lives and that they make everything secondary to this”. I also like the statement of Martin Luther King Jr. who said, “A life without a cause is not worth living”. Do we have a cause for living today?

If the Church of Jesus Christ is to have greater global impact in this new millennium, we His disciples must be prepared to flow in the new wave of apostolic and prophetic anointing. Now is the time for the Body of Christ to be united with one voice of intercession and become a joint networking vehicle of evangelization for the nation and the world. We still have many denominations, churches and ministries but our primary goal is to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ, reach multitudes with the message of hope and salvation and reap the harvest of souls for the Kingdom!

How am I excited whenever I hear of churches taking over theatres and warehouses for community services and evangelistic outreaches! Many Christians are taking advantage of the tremendous opportunities in presenting the Good News through the multi-media of computer, Internet, music and television. Now, doors are also being opened for Christian drama, literature and painting to influence the society in a positive way.

CHARISMA

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Ho’ly Ghost, and *with* fire” (Matthew 3:11).

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17-18).

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Charisma means according to God’s grace and favor. It can also refer to spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Since the early twentieth century, the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit have begun to be restored to the Body of Christ. Over the last few years, there is also a reformation of the ministry gifts of the apostles and the prophets in the Church.

Yet, I believe there is a greater wave of the miraculous that is yet to come on the earth, “ASK ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the

LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field” (Zechariah 10:1); “And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:7-9).

In recent times, the rise of “famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes” (Matthew 24:7) has caused fear to grip the hearts of many. These are just a few signs of what the Bible calls “the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8). However, as these troubles hit our world, the Church of Jesus Christ will arise with greater manifestations of God’s glory, “ARISE, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gen’tiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Of all the gifts and ministries that are being restored to the Church, I believe that the gifts of healing and the working of miracles (according to 1 Corinthians 12:8-9) are going to be more pronounced. Now, I am not saying that these gifts are more important than the rest but simply because we have not permitted them to function in the way God intends them to function and they have been lying dormant for years. Of course, we already have some great healing, signs and wonders ministries in the Body of Christ today but the magnitude of these manifestations will be greater in the near future, “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall” (Malachi 4:2).

COVENANT

“But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day” (Deuteronomy 8:18).

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2).

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A covenant is an agreement, contract and commitment between two or more parties based on a mutual relationship. I believe that the Body of Christ is moving from fellowship into covenant partnership to impact our communities and cities. Prospective church leaders in the new millennium will need more than academic attainment in Bible colleges; they will also need to receive the spiritual mentoring and impartation that flow from other seasoned ministers, “Behold, I will send you E-li’jah the prophet

before the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6); “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19).

Not only will there be a revolution in preparing and raising disciples for Christ, a revelation of our spiritual inheritance will also be unleashed in an unprecedented way. The covenant of walking in divine faith, health and wealth, I believe, will be exercised and exhibited in the lives of Christians without the errors, excesses and extremes that have been preached and taught by some ministers over the last few decades. Through the years, the Body of Christ has become more balanced and matured in handling the gospel of “faith, health and wealth” even though there will always be some members of the Church who will continue to believe and teach the unscriptural aspects of this message.

Now, walking in divine faith, health and wealth means that God wants to release us in spirit, soul and body to carry out His work, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Je’sus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Depression, disease and debt have disturbed the lives of God’s people for too long and it is time that we ask Him to destroy the demonic devourer for us. Deliverance is promised when we sow into the work of God’s Kingdom, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:10-12). Here, the dividing line is drawn between Christians who faithfully present their tithes and offerings and others who don’t. Perhaps, some of you need a miracle, whether it is financial, physical or spiritual. The key to meet your need is to sow a seed! You are a carrier and courier of His character, courage, charisma and covenant for such a time as this!

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