

## **I. GOD'S PLAN TO DISCIPLE THE NATIONS**

***And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mt. 24:14)***

***Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. (Mt. 28:19-20)***

- A. God has a very definite plan to the disciple the nations of the earth. He has a very specific strategy in His heart concerning His purpose to disciple the nations to love Him.

## **II. THE GENERATION OF THE LORD'S RETURN**

- A. We're standing in the midst of a great transitional generation prior to Jesus' return. Jesus clarified three supernatural, transitional generations in Scripture: **1.** the generation of Noah, **2.** the generation of Jesus' first coming, **3.** and the generation of the Lord's return.

- B. Jesus stood in His transitional generation, and as a prophetic "prototype", referenced Noah's transitional generation, while pointing to the last transitional generation of His return (Matthew 24-25):

***But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Mt. 24:37)***

- C. This transitional generation will witness the most radical shifting and change on the earth. I believe we're living in this transitional generation.

## **III. SIGN TRENDS OF THE GENERATION OF THE LORD'S RETURN**

- A. Jesus gave **12 negative sign trends** that bring distress to the nations and indicate the generation of His return (Mt. 24:4-14; Lk. 21:11, 25). Matthew described nine and Luke added three more (fearful sights, signs in the sky affecting the sun, moon and stars, and disturbances in the sea).

- B. The 12 negative sign trends that bring distress to the nations are **deception** and false prophets (Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 24), **ethnic conflict** (Mt. 24:7), **economic warfare** (Mt. 24:7), **famines, pestilences, and earthquakes** (Mt. 24:8), **hatred of believers** (Mt. 24:9), **relational breakdown** in society (Mt. 24:10), **lawlessness** (*violence and immorality*) causing love to grow cold (Mt. 24:12), **fearful sights** (Lk. 21:11), signs in the **sky** and disturbances in the **sea** (Lk. 21:11, 25).

1. ***Fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 24:14)*** - the Call2All missions summits: the leaders of the world's largest missions organizations estimate that, for the first time in the history of the church, we are approaching the fulfillment of the Great Commission. By their calculations, this is a very real probability within the next 15-20 years (give or take).
2. ***The establishment of the state of Israel (1948)*** - The state of Israel had to be reestablished to fulfill many end-time prophecies related to Jerusalem. Israel was

scattered to the nations in AD 70. On May 14, 1948, Israel became a nation *in one day* after almost 2,000 years without a homeland. This is extraordinary and unprecedented in history. (*Isa. 66:8*)

- a. No end-time sign event is more dramatic or convincing than the return of Israel to her homeland. Ten years before Israel became a nation, it would have seemed impossible to anyone. Suddenly, out of the burning ashes of the Holocaust, Israel became a nation. Over 5 million Israelites are back in their homeland, making it the largest return to Israel, surpassing the exodus from Egypt.
  3. ***The City of Jerusalem under control of the Jewish people (1967)*** - Jerusalem being under the control of the State of Israel fulfills many biblical OT prophecies (Joel 3:1-2; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Lk. 21:24). For the first time in 2,000 years, the Jewish people gained control of Jerusalem as a result of the Six Day War in June 1967.
    - a. God's end-times purposes are tied directly to Israel. These events which fulfilled biblical prophecy are of the utmost importance. Something shifted on God's "prophetic timetable" when these events occurred. Watch and wait!
  4. ***The Salvation of Israel (Mt. 23:37-39)*** - Jesus will not return until the Jewish people declare "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Israel will respond to the beauty of Jesus! God's plans are directly tied to Israel loving His Son Jesus. This means *your* plans are directly tied to Israel as well.
  5. ***The Bridal revelation of Jesus operating in the Church - The Spirit and the Bride*** say come Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:17-20; Jn. 3:29)
  6. ***The End-Time Prayer Movement*** - the "incense ministry" arising throughout the earth (Mal. 1:11), restoration of the tabernacle of David (Amos 9:11; Acts 15:16-17), identity of the redeemed as a house of prayer (how the redeemed will operate in the Spirit) (Is. 56:7; Lk. 18).
  7. ***Globalization*** - the end of the age will have a global expression of political, cultural, technological, and economic systems that will affect the entire earth as one false world religion is established during the Antichrist's reign.
- C. ***Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. (Matthew 24:34)***
- D. Jesus declared that there will be only one generation who sees all these trends and events occurring at the same time. This is the only generation in which it has been possible to see the fulfillment of all the sign trends, events, and prophecies mentioned regarding Israel and the end-times.

#### **IV. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS**

***...that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:20-21)***

- A. Jesus' return is directly related to God's commitment to restore all things. The "all things" spoken of by the prophets refers to the restoration of society and the restoration of the church.
- B. This is a central theme of millennial teaching. When Jesus returns He will personally govern a worldwide Kingdom from Jerusalem, and the Kingdom of God will be openly and globally manifest affecting every sphere of life (political, social, agricultural, economic, spiritual, educational, family, arts, technology, environment, social institutions, etc.). God will restore all things.

***Behold, I make all things new. (Rev. 21:5)***

- C. The restoration of the church is the primary vehicle that God will use to restore society (Mt. 5:13-15; 16:18-19; 28:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:15). God has a plan to fully restore and mature the church (Eph. 3:19; 4:13; 5:27; Rev. 19).
- D. How will this restoration occur? Jesus prophesied that Elijah will come to restore all things (Mt. 17:10-13; Mal. 4:5-6). Malachi had also prophesied the coming of Elijah before the Day of the Lord.
- E. It's in that transitional generation that God promises to release the Spirit of Elijah upon -- that is, the generation that will see the full expression of man's wickedness (Dan. 8:23; Rev. 17-18), the Devil's wicked intent, God's judgments, and finally, Jesus' return to earth -- will also witness an extraordinary turning of the hearts of fathers and children, *before* the great and terrible Day of the Lord (Mt. 11:1-19; Mal. 4:5-6).

***Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. (Mt. 17:11)***

***Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers... (Mal. 4:5-6)***

- F. The coming of Elijah, like the coming of Jesus and the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit, is released in two stages. This created confusion with Jesus' disciples in Mk. 9:11-13. Jesus claimed that John the Baptist was Elijah, if the people were "willing to receive it" and that Elijah was to come another time. (John denied that he was Elijah.) The answer comes from Gabriel's declaration that, "The spirit of Elijah would rest upon John," (Lk 1:17) fulfilling the prophecy in part at Jesus' first coming.
  - 1. The Old Testament promises of a coming Messiah will not be fully fulfilled until Jesus returns and reigns as King over the nations. Therefore, Elijah's coming was to be related to both aspects of Jesus' coming. **First**, the spirit of Elijah was upon John at Jesus' first coming. **Then** the full release of Elijah is related to Jesus' second coming in full glory.

2. Also, John did not witness the full restoration of all things that Jesus prophesied about. Thus, Malachi 4:5-6 reveals a key truth in the Father's plans for restoring all things at the end of the age. Imagine what God could have highlighted in this passage as His end-time strategy? Religious Institutions? Government? Great Leaders? But in His brilliance He zeros in on the foundational reality of the family and a fathering spirit.
3. **The restoration of the family and the release of a fathering spirit upon apostolic communities is God's strategy for restoring the Church and society at the end of the age.**

## **V. THE INFINITE FATHERLINESS OF GOD**

- A. In God's plan, fatherhood was the foundation of mature ministry. At the heart of the story of the gospel is a heavenly Father who is filled with desire for a family and a heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus, who wants a bride. Just as Elijah who, in intercession, stretched himself out over the widow's dead son in the upper room and brought the boy back to life as God answered his prayer, so God will do with fathers and a fathering spirit in this generation.
- B. God is revealing His own infinite fatherliness to the nations now. How?
  1. The Father revealed Himself when He sent His son as the exact representation of His person. One of the Messiah's main titles in Is. 9:6 is Everlasting Father. Jesus did not just act like a father, but His very nature and name is that of an everlasting father. The entirety of Jesus' ministry was to reveal the Father.

***For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Is. 9:6)***

***"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." . . . He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (Jn. 14:7-9)***

***And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it . . . (Jn. 17:26)***
  2. The Father pours out His love in us through the Holy Spirit.

***Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Rom. 5:5)***
  3. A fathering spirit is not based on your marital status or if you have any children. Jesus modeled a fathering heart as a young, single man (Is. 9:6; Mk. 10:13-15). God desire is to fill His church with His own Fatherly heart in love. He promises more than for us to simply long for a tender, fathering heart in our quiet times. He wants to *manifest* His infinite fatherliness in and through us.

- a. This comes as we first give ourselves first to the First Commandment (beholding, becoming principle 2 Cor. 3:18; Mt. 22:37), then to serving young people and others out of that place of love.
- C. Four general spheres of this plan:
1. Godly individuals filled with the grace and knowledge of God - "burning and shining lamps".
  2. The godly family that are made up of these godly individuals.
  3. The corporate unified church, walking in the fullness of God (apostolic communities).
  4. Society itself which is ruled by the civil government.
- D. Summary: Godly individuals produce godly families which walk in unity to result in unified churches in the power and fullness of God that affect the social order. Jesus likened living this lifestyle of radical obedience to a bright, burning light and a city set on hill to affect the entire social order (Mt. 5:13-15).

## **VI. APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY**

- A. God will restore the spiritual fathers (apostles, prophets, nazirites, etc.) in the church that will help lead the church to maturity (Eph. 4:11-13). The apostles and prophets of our generation will be fully established as ones filled with the heart and wisdom of a father (1 Thess. 2:11; 1 Cor. 4:14-15; 1 Jn. 2:13-14). I'm convinced we will see a nameless, faceless generation of leaders arise who are filled with passion for Jesus who will voluntarily give themselves in love and for love.
- B. Subsequently, John the baptist was a prototype of this reality for the end of the age. He came in a transitional generation to prepare a people so they wouldn't miss the hour visitation. It required of him spiritual violence (or radical obedience) Mt. 11. John wasn't a reed shaken by the wind!
1. **"The constitution of a community is more important than the passion of its worship or the fervency of its prayers." - Lou Engle**

***If two of you agree (sumphoneo) on earth concerning anything you ask... (Mt. 18:19)***

2. Sumphoneo means to be in accord; to be in harmony. The word "symphony" actually comes from "sumphoneo." Jesus was speaking of something more than a mere mental assent to a prayer focus; He was describing the constitution of a community! The context of Matthew 18 is that of walking in humility, removing offenses, the confession of sins and forgiving one another, etc.
3. **Get a vision for spiritual violence (radical obedience) in apostolic community -- to confront the issues of your heart as you pursue passion for Jesus!**
4. Entering into this kind of agreement requires radical obedience. Radical obedience is only possible through divine grace. It is not a "natural tendency."

- C. Challenge: If you're longing in your heart to see Jesus' return; if you've been capture by the worth and beauty of this Man; if you want to walk in radical obedience to the Lord; if you want the nations of the earth to be captured by the beauty of Jesus; to be received as the reward of His sufferings, then give yourself to pursuing the Lord by operating in a fathering spirit, in building authentic relationships, through prayer and fasting, learning to love in the midst of apostolic community!
- D. Whoever influence our children will rule our nation. This is why God is restoring fatherhood in the church in this urgent hour.
- E. Most ministries focus on ministry impact, on gaining members with greater resources, and making our ministry footprints larger to extend influence. But God chose the family unit for the advancement of the Kingdom. Even the mystery of the Incarnation was dependent on family lines. 4000 The Father is committed to having a family and a Bride, fully restored, for His Son at the end of age.
  - 1. The Lord is committed to building a house - (Psalm 127). He is committed to restoring families and the house of God. We must totally commit to building what God builds (Mt. 7:24-29). God does not just want a mobilized workforce!
- F. The outpouring of the spirit in the disciples generation was a result of their radical lifestyles in this manner (Acts 2).

***But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:7)***

***...And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles... (Acts 2:42-43; see also Acts 2:42-47)***

***But above all these things put on love... (Col. 3:14; also see 1 Cor. 13)***

- G. Church history witnesses to the power that God released through a companies of individuals who walked in apostolic community. Some examples:
  - 1. **The Moravians and Herrnhut (1700's)** - Count Zinzendorf opened up his lands and homes to persecuted Protestants. The community first suffered from disagreements and dissension but underwent a radical transformation as they experienced a Holy Spirit visitation and "learned to love one another." Resulting in the establishment of 24/7 prayer, and the Moravians being the first to send laymen as missionaries, the first to go to those in slavery, the first to go into many countries.
  - 2. **Rees Howell's Bible College of Wales during World War II** - The Bible College of Wales essentially became a house of prayer as around 100+ students gave themselves in prayer and fasting in the midst of apostolic community lifestyles.

3. **John and Charles Wesley's Holy Club (1700's)** - purposefully set aside time for prayer, the study of the Word, meeting together, feeding the poor, helping orphans, and examining their own spiritual lives. Their lifestyles helped usher in the 1st Great Awakening.