

OUR VISION OUR FOCUS

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In this day of unlimited communication of ideas, theories, opinions, philosophies and freedom of expression, the onus to stay focused on what God has called us to has never been more pressing. What did Jesus teach about the problems of Christian origins? What did He do about that? These questions were answered centuries ago by His Apostles who were in company with Him on earth. Peter would say, “I remember . . .” Mark would add, “I overheard Jesus say . . .” They also wrote about their experiences of walking and talking with Jesus so that today we can read their accounts. The Holy Spirit helps our unbelief so that we, with all certainty, believe the events of Jesus’ birth, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The reality of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1948 and the truths that sprang from it are that hardly a soul remains who actually witnessed that wondrous event. We sometimes hear the question arise, “In what ways should the church adapt itself to the day in which we live?”

Insidiously, there are ever-present those who wish to adopt modern church vernacular. However, let it be known that what God began, He will finish. Therefore we must not let our anchor slip and fall back into what God called us out of. We must stay true to the course that has been set before us. God’s plan will be fulfilled, and we will be part of this great plan if we stay focused on the vision and goal that God has set.

To achieve success in any endeavour, staying focused on the ultimate goal determines if someone will succeed or not. One of the principal truths revealed in the early part of this present move of the Holy Spirit was entering into sonship, culminating in the coming together of the body of Christ. It is this truth that this writing will address, for it is the coming together of the body of Christ that will restore all creation back to Himself. It is this vision that we need to keep before our eyes. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself" (Ephesians 1:3-5, NKJV). The word 'adoption' was not in the English language when the King James version was written. The translators found 'adoption' in the French language and imported it into the English language as it closely portrayed the meaning of the Greek word 'húiothesia' which means 'placing of a son.' The French word 'adoption' in the mid 1500's meant to bring someone into a special relationship with someone else. And that is exactly what God is doing. He is bringing His elect into a special relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ.

When the truth of the coming together of the body of Christ rang forth, the Christian world was divided into many sectarian (separate or inflexible) groups of believers. So it is today. For centuries, Christians have been divided one against another because of human wrangling over doctrine, creed, tradition and rituals. But Jesus said, *"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd"* (John 10:16, NKJV). Jesus, looking into the future, recognized that God's people would be divided one against another. But He also prophesied that it would not always be so. Jesus promised to bring all believers together into one group, one fold, one body, one congregation; and they would hear His voice, and He would be their Shepherd. In this scripture Jesus prophesied about the coming together of the body of Christ. All of Christ's teaching were targeted towards the restoration of what had been lost when sin entered this world through man's disobedience. This restoration that the New Testament recorded of the teachings of Jesus will only happen by the coming together of the body of Christ.

The apostle Paul wrote about his vision for the church, the body of Christ. *"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many"* (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, NKJV). Yes, many individual members but joined together as one body. Humanly speaking, as we look at the present world situation, it appears doubtful that all of God's people will someday be part of one great company.

Jesus said it will happen; let us believe it.

Paul continues writing of the coming together of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:16-20, *"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."* In these scriptures, Paul provides a clear picture of what Christ has already accomplished by His death and resurrection, but also what lies ahead. After Christ's resurrection, He spent forty days visiting and encouraging His disciples. Then Jesus rose from this earth to be with His Father in heaven, but He will return to this earth as the angels foretold. *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11, NKJV). Jesus will come again, and we will see Him face to face if we are faithful to our calling. Glory to God. What a vision, what a wonderful promise, what an amazing hope. Jesus is coming to establish the kingdom of God here on this earth.

"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14, NKJV). *"But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever"* (Daniel 7:18, NKJV).

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29-31, NKJV).

“Then a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!’ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ 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. Then he said to me, ‘Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God’” (Revelations 19:5-9, NKJV).

As part of the process of restoration of all creation to its former glory, as it was before Adam and Eve sinned, Christ is going to return to this earth. He will then be united with His bride, His body, meaning those who have been perfected in Him. Then together they will possess God’s kingdom to restore righteous rule on the earth.

Jesus is going to return to this earth because it is God’s intention *“that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him”* (Ephesians 1:10, NKJV). Paul is saying that Christ is going to bring everything, including humans, into their rightful place as members of His body, the body of Christ. This will be accomplished in the most simplistic terms by His chosen, elect people being perfected in Christ so that they will qualify to rule and reign with Him when He returns to this earth to claim His kingdom. It is God’s intention to bring an elect, remnant company of people to full maturity, or to perfection in Christ, to become the bride of Christ on His return to earth. Then, and only then, will the process begin in earnest of restoring the earth to its former glory as it was before it fell into sin and decay.

World-renowned scientists are ringing the warning bells that the earth is on a downhill slide into extinction through self destruction. The world population is increasing faster than world food production. The earth is being poisoned by uncontrolled emission of greenhouse gases. Plants and animals are becoming extinct because of deforestation, etc. A grim picture lies ahead, but be assured that God has a plan to restore and to stop this downhill slide to extinction and will bring all creation back to its original state, for God is a God of hope and fulfilled promises. The prophet Micah spoke of this hope for all mankind:

“Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken” (Micah 4:2-4, NKJV).

What hope we have to look forward to - peace among men and the end of war.

Everywhere you look the order of God is evident. The sun rises, the sun sets - every day. The moon appears on pre-determined days of each month. The sun shines on our lakes and oceans and causes water to evaporate to form clouds. Clouds moved by wind cross over the land and as they rise they release rain to nourish the land. Excess water runs downhill towards the lakes and oceans so the supply of water in the earth is never diminished. When water freezes it absorbs air bubbles so it is less dense than water so it floats. A young man falls in love with a maiden. If they marry and the wife conceives, a child is born. The man does not give birth to a child for it is God’s order that that responsibility falls to the woman. Is it any more difficult to believe that God has a plan, an order, a process by which He will restore all creation unto Himself?

What is God’s plan to restore all creation to Himself and what is the process He is following?

Simply put, the following outlines what God has revealed to His church. The process has already begun and God’s restoration of all creation is coming through:

God is restoring the offices of traveling elders and deacons (apostolic brethren) and they in turn are functioning in the five fold ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

Apostolic brethren are establishing local churches and setting local elders and deacons who carry the responsibility of the oversight of a local flock of people,

a local church (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5).

God's order of tithing and veracious administration of church financing in all churches is being taught (Genesis 14:18-22, 2 Kings 12:9-10, Malachi 3:6-10).

Presbyteries of apostolic brethren are visiting local churches to lay hands on and impart, by prophecy, gifts of the Holy Spirit to individual members of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12 & Ephesians 4:7-8).

Local elders and deacons are shepherding the local assemblies not as lords, but by example, teaching the truths of the kingdom of God according to what has been ministered by the apostolic brethren and by encouraging body ministry (1 Peter 5:1-3, 1 Corinthians 14).

The home is being established according to God's order. If the home includes a man and wife and they are blessed with children, it is their responsibility to teach and bring their children up in the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 5:22-33 and 6:1-4).

Apostolic brethren are visiting local churches to instruct, stir-up, edify, correct and encourage the saints to carry on until the day of the Lord's return and to *"be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour"* (2 Peter 3:2; see also 2 Peter 1:13,16-21 and Acts 14:21-28).

If we stay under the covering of the order of God outlined above and fit into the places God has for us as individuals, we can be assured that God will finish the work He has begun. In His time He will bring the body of Christ together as one and restore all creation unto Himself.

Let us keep our focus on the vision of going on to sonship so we can witness the coming together of the body of Christ.†

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