

3,18,21 The Purpose of the New Creation, Part 1

I'm going to start by sharing some things I jotted down last week, kind of an overview on what I believe is going on.

What's happening now has nothing to do with politics or elections or conservative vs. liberal. This is as far beyond those issues as the spiritual world is above the temporal world.

The god of this world is being increasingly released to steal, kill and destroy.

Evil is encompassing the nations in deception and lawlessness, trying to eliminate truth, righteousness and compassion from the earth.

We are nearing the final push of the enemy to remove all traces of God from the world; including whatever light is left in the Church.

God will respond to all of this.

And it's that response that we're going to explore tonight.

In a few years from now, human history as we've known it for the last 6000 years will end. In the valley of Megiddo, Christ and Antichrist will meet face to face, each surrounded by the humanity that embodies their nature.

For the Antichrist, his humanity will be filled with fear and hatred for God. For Christ, embodied in the new humanity, it will be a time of reckoning and destruction of all that opposes God's Anointed.

And just prior to that time, at the end of the Church age, God will have a response to the apostate, Laodicean condition of the Church.

God's overcomers will have a global, spiritual impact on this world. Just as in the book "The Heavenly Man", which details the life of Brother Yun of China, the book of Acts will be on a global scale and will be the normal modes operandi of the remnant's outreach in the power of Christ's resurrection.

God has responded like this throughout history.

When Israel went into apostasy, the Lord raised up prophets to embody and proclaim God's thought for His people. At other times the Lord raised up a corporate testimony, as in the case of the Levites.

For the Church age, God's response to Laodicea will be Philadelphia. He will ensure that Christ will be seen and glorified in His end-time overcomers while, simultaneously, Satan will continue to finalize the formation of the kingdom of Antichrist.

And then God will rapture His remnant to Himself and send the world a delusion that will cause them to fully embrace the Antichrist kingdom.

Before we get into this, I need to share something from a book called "Prophetic Ministry".

"We must at once make some discrimination, for when we speak of prophetic ministry, we find that people are very largely governed by a certain mentality associated with what is called 'prophecy'. They immediately relate the term 'prophetic' to incidents, happenings, dates, and so on, lying mainly in the future. That is, they think instantly of the *predictive* element in prophetic ministry and limit the whole function to that conception.

We must remove from our minds that restricted idea of the pre-eminence of the predictive aspect in prophetic ministry. It is an aspect, but it is only an aspect. Prophetic ministry is a much larger thing than the predictive.

Perhaps it would be better if we said that the prophetic function, going far beyond mere events, happenings and dates, is the ministry of *spiritual interpretation*. Prophecy is spiritual interpretation. It is the interpretation of everything from a spiritual standpoint; the bringing of the spiritual implications of things before the people of God, and giving them to understand the significance of things in their spiritual value and meaning. That was and is the essence of prophetic ministry.

I am quite sure that those who have any knowledge whatever of the times will agree with me when I say that the crying need of our time is for a prophetic ministry. There never was a time when there existed so extensively the need for a voice of interpretation, when conditions needed

more the ministry of explanation. One does not want to make extravagant statements or to be extreme in one's utterances, but I do not think it would be either extravagant or extreme to say that the world today is bankrupt of real prophetic ministry in this sense - a voice that interprets the mind of God to people.

Recognizing that, we must come to see exactly what this function is. What is the function of prophetic ministry? It is to hold things to the full thought of God, and therefore it is *usually a reactionary thing*. We usually find that the prophets arose as a *reaction* from God to the course and drift of things among His people; a call back, a re-declaration, a re-pronouncement of God's mind, a bringing into clear view again of the thoughts of God. The prophets stood in the midst of the stream - usually a fast-rushing stream - like a rock; the course of things broke over them. They challenged and resisted that course, and their presence in the midst of the stream represented God's mind as against the prevailing course of things.

In the Old Testament, the prophet usually came into his ministry at a time when things were spiritually bad and anything but according to the Divine mind; things were confused, mixed, chaotic; there was much deception and falsehood. Here is the thing to which the prophetic ministry all-inclusively relates - the original and ultimate purpose of God in and through His people; and when you have said that, you have got right to the heart of things. We ask again, what is the prophetic ministry, what is the prophetic function, to what does it relate? - and the answer all-inclusively is that it relates to the full, original and ultimate purpose of God in and through His people."

I hope that makes sense. As the author says, "this is the crying need of our time."

This world, including the Church, is filled with confusion, mistrust and a frantic search for answers and meaning to all that's happening.

The Lord brings light and understanding to us, just as He has done a million times in the past, when those among His people seek Him with their whole heart.

Now, with that foundation to build on, we can move into the practical side of God's response to the darkness in the world and in the Church.

I'm going to begin with an excerpt from book entitled "Experiencing Church Now, As It Was in The Beginning", written by a pastor in Santiago, Chile (translated from Spanish to English),

And as we go through what we'll be looking at tonight, I want to encourage you to try and see these things in a very personal way. In other words, what does this mean for me? Here's what he wrote:

"Perhaps this may sound strange if one considers the concepts that on the average are used by the majority of Christians. Certainly, a brick building where a group of people gather once a week to sing a little, hear a sermon, make one or two prayers and then leave, each one to their home, to continue their 'real' life the remaining six days, clearly does not seem to be the work of God in the history of the Church age. And truly this is not the case. But the Church, conceived so as to be the full and elevated expression of the divine life on the earth, is a very different matter from the concepts, ideas, projects, organizations and buildings that have been developed throughout history which have used its name. Nevertheless, it was not always so. For at least the first 100 years of Christian history a certain 'something' existed which was worthy of using that name. Our need to call it 'something', whose character and nature are almost inaccessible to us today, is the most concrete evidence of how far our current concepts have strayed. But do we not have the New Testament and with it, all we need to know about the primitive Church? Can we not study its principles and methodologies and apply them today? This is what modern Churches do and in principle it seems a good way to go, but *it is not*. Because it omits a fundamental issue. Something more is needed: A deep, transforming revelation of the Spirit in our hearts, which is capable of revolutionizing all of our Christian experience (we need to see the Body of Christ through His eyes, and only the Holy Spirit can give us that sight)." However, this revelation has a price that most are unwilling to pay. Because before building His holy temple, God destroys the vain building that has been raised up by our own efforts. If we draw near to Him to know the truth, we must be prepared to be exposed and naked under the divine light. This will mean much suffering and loss for us, because it is extremely difficult to be faced with our true condition. In eternity God already established that His life

would be known, experienced and expressed through a living organism, the Church, and nothing less than that could ever satisfy His heart. To experience the divine life, we first have to lose our own, we have to be demolished before we can be built up. This is the seal of any true work born of His hands.”

Being demolished and rebuilt is exactly what the Lord is doing in those whose hearts are His. It explains everything that’s happening in our lives; especially the things that feel like unexplained mysteries.

It’s not happening to all believers simply because not all Christians have the same inner desire to know and live in Christ regardless of the personal cost.

We’re all struggling with a growing realization that what we see in the scriptures and what we see around us, and even in us, isn’t the same thing.

All a person has to do is read the Book of Acts and if they’re honest and objective, they can’t help but see the difference between Western Christianity and the early Church.

And when I say it’s not the same thing, I don’t mean that it’s just *less* than what God had in mind, or that since there are a few good, spiritual believers within it, somehow that makes it like the early Church, only weaker.

Our Christianity will never be able to experience genuine spiritual growth or impact on the world, if we still keep the forms, religious design and traditions we’ve been using since the beginning of this generation.

And I’ve noticed that, if Christians are confronted with the real meaning of the Church, they respond exactly like Israel did at the time of Israel’s final prophet, Malachi – confusion, resentment and sometimes anger.

Maybe the best way to show this as a historical event, is to look at Malachi.

Malachi was the prophet sent to Israel near the end of the Jewish dispensation – appx. 400 years before Messiah came. Over the centuries Israel (both northern and southern kingdoms) had drifted so far from God’s original intent, given to them through Moses, that when Malachi showed up and pointed this out to them, they had no idea what he was talking about.

That's exactly what the apostles predicted about the condition and reaction at the end of the Church age also. Believers "will not endure (tolerate) sound teaching".

Of course, most Churches would probably agree with this, while insisting vigorously that this applies to other Churches, not theirs. Which is exactly what Israel did with Malachi.

(Mal. 1:6-14) "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is the [reverent] fear and respect due Me?" says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise My name. *But you say*, 'How and in what way have we despised Your name?' You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. *But you say*, 'How have we defiled You?' By thinking that the table of the Lord is contemptible and may be despised. When you [priests] present the blind [animals] for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer such a thing [as a blind or lame or sick animal] to your governor [as a gift or as payment for your taxes]. Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you graciously?" says the Lord of hosts. "Oh, that there were even one among you [whose duty it is to minister to Me] who would shut the gates, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar uselessly [with an empty, worthless pretense]! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from your hand. For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, My name shall be great among the nations. In every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name shall be great among the nations," says the Lord of hosts. "*But you say*, 'How tiresome this is!' And you disdainfully scorn it," says the Lord of hosts."

Even though, unfortunately, this is a general reality in our country, at the same time, even if a local Church only has a few growing believers scattered in, frustrated with how things are, *all* of them are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

As one author put it,

"Some Churches in the West may not be totally void of some degree of spiritual reality. Nevertheless, such reality is found, generally hindered by an immense quantity of concepts, structures, programs and practices that are basically human in origin."

The Churches around us, where the Lord has placed us geographically, are a spiritual mission field for us.

Nearly everyone we know in the fellowships we've been involved in for the last 50 years are people we were able to develop relationships with, not because we *left* what we felt was a spiritually non-functional Church, but because we stayed as long as we could, reached out to those who were open, and did what we could to help.

The only reason we're not in a Church now is because I don't know where to go – God hasn't made that clear.

I would not advise people to leave the Church they're in unless that Church is teaching heresy or is leavened with unconfessed immorality, or has become completely stagnant – just going through the same tired motions every week, but never moving forward.

Then, unless you can reach and impact those within that Church who realize they are spiritually starving, you need to move on.

So, what we have to see clearly, in the scriptures, is our Lord's *own* explanation of the Church *He's* building. Not the one Man is building.

You've seen the documentary I sent out on the Power of the Persecuted Church – the testimonies coming out of China and Africa.

And we've probably all read books on the Church in the Eastern Bloc nations in Europe and in North Korea.

It's always the same: The life of Jesus Himself seen in His disciples versus an organized religion pretending to be what it can't be, because it won't pay the price to enter that reality.

Since the true Church is people, not just groups or organizations, the Spirit works meticulously and faithfully with us as individuals, responding to the level of desire He sees in us to become what God has always wanted His children to be.

For example, when we talk about 'losing our lives', as soon as we hear that, even knowing it's the foundational requirement for being a disciple of Christ, we immediately relegate it to a poetic illustration of self-sacrifice.

But He doesn't say we are to 'sacrifice things for the cause'. He says we are to pick up our cross. There nothing poetic about a cross; crosses don't just eliminate the bad and keep the good. They kill the whole person.

Losing our lives has nothing to do with moderation or even zealous religious commitment. It has to do with the willing destruction of all we are in Adam and our reconstruction into the image of Christ.

Like Paul says, "I am delivered unto death daily", so that "the life of Jesus may be manifest through my mortal flesh".

That's the absolute sovereign rule of the Head of the Church over His corporate body which has offered itself to Him as a living sacrifice.

As to how practical that becomes for us, depends entirely on how responsive we are to His exhortations to us personally; from the very smallest details of our lives and behavior, where adjustment and obedience are requested, to the highest loss of the self-life possible in martyrdom.

Let's pull back for a few minutes from street level and renew our understanding of the Church from heaven's viewpoint. If we can't see clearly what the Lord meant by the word "Church", we won't be able to distinguish the real from the imitation.

One way we can avoid having our brains lock on the wrong image of the Church is to look at this from the perspective of the New Creation instead of thinking of an organization of some kind.

So, the question is this: What was in God's heart and mind when He decided to create a new species of humanity in His Son's image? What really lies behind all this?

Listen to this comment by Sparks,

"That is the sphere of the Holy Spirit's function, to make that known, and when God has a people in full intelligence in that spiritual way, He has something which to Him is of tremendous importance and value."

Because of the misconceptions that have been pounded into our minds about the Church, we need to start thinking of this as people in all nations who are living in

Christ – who are simply providing, by God’s grace, a visible, outward expression of His indwelling life.

True spiritual growth is measured, not by knowledge alone, but by the steady, visible increase of Christ seen in us.

This is the purpose of the New Creation. It’s a type of creation that returns us to God’s original intent in the Garden – “Let us make man in our image”.

In 2021, the Lord desires to launch His image, through His people, into all the world.

There is a divine power resident in us that nothing on earth can withstand. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the resurrection power of the indwelling Christ.

As this author states it,

“If the Church were only an organization, a congregation, it would not matter to Satan or anyone else, but when constituted by God, it is something to be reckoned with in the universe.”

This is what the Spirit is working toward in all He takes us through. To show the world the power of Christ in resurrection glory.

Satan is constantly challenging this, either through imitation by drawing believers into something less, or by persecution, trying to eliminate its presence altogether.

Why he hasn’t figured out that imitation and deception are way more effective than persecution, is beyond me. But there’s never been an automatic correlation between IQ and pragmatism.

So, the war rages on. And establishing the rights of Christ, first in ourselves, and then in this universe, is what’s at the core of that war.

The driving force of the New Creation, through their intense love for their Lord, is to do all they can to establish the rights of God in this world.

Christ is the rightful sovereign of this universe, not the governments of the world and not the principalities and powers behind them. Only Jesus of Nazareth.

To understand *why* we are here after salvation, it is to have our mind and choices governed by the Spirit of God in relation to the rights of Christ.

That's our real battle, not the one that involves politics and cultural trends. It's principalities and powers that we wrestle with, not democrats and globalists.

Christ defended the rights of His Father and now, we have been commissioned to defend the rights of the Son as the One worthy to be the King of creation.

If you read through the book of Acts you will see that the gospel presented by the early Church was more of a *declaration* than an *offer*.

I'll just give two examples for sake of time, but feel free to examine the evangelistic messages given in various places in Acts.

First example – Peter in Acts 2:29-36:

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man accredited and attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God worked through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—this Man, when handed over [to the Roman authorities] according to the predetermined decision and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross and put to death by the hands of lawless and godless men. But God raised Him up, releasing Him and bringing an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in death's power. . . . 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.' Therefore, let all the house of Israel recognize that God has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified.”

That's not “the four spiritual laws” or “the Roman road”. That's a proclamation of the right of God's Son to be obeyed and worshipped.

Second example – Paul in Acts 17:22-32:

“So, Paul, standing in the center of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious and devout in all respects. Now as I was going along and carefully looking at your objects of worship, I came to an altar with this inscription: 'to an unknown god'. Therefore, what you already worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who created the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, because He gives to all [people] life and breath and all

things. And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands and territories. This was so that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grasp for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' So then, being God's children, we should not think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination or skill of man. Therefore, God overlooked and disregarded the former ages of ignorance; but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day when He will judge the inhabited world in righteousness by a Man whom He has appointed and destined for that task, and He has provided credible proof to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

Not only was the spiritual and moral character of the early Christians superior to us, but their primary message to the lost was significantly different also – and that message turned the world upside down, because the Holy Spirit moves in power and conviction, honoring *any* proclamation of the sovereign rights of the Son of God over His creation.

Peter and Paul believed their audiences didn't need to hear a gospel that simply gives a "take it or leave it" offer, leaving them with the impression that their choice may be important, but it's not an eternal life or death decision, nor is it a demand for men to surrender to their Creator.

That's why the world as a whole hated the early church.

Those in whom Satan energizes, demand *their* rights to rule, not Christ's. You can offer them anything, but don't tell them that God is to be obeyed.

We can also put all of this into the context of temptation.

In the temptation of Christ, Lucifer was trying to gain ascendancy over Him, to take away His right as the heir of God and to place himself in that position.

First, Satan tried to get Jesus to act independently of God (which would have meant that Jesus was willing to take to Himself rights that only God had).

Then, this was the enemy's last temptation and the one that genuinely represents the real battle of the ages,

“And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this realm and its glory; because it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You worship before me, it will all be Yours.” Jesus replied to him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”

I'm sure this is what one author I read must have meant by saying, “The whole explanation of Christ in the flesh is the rights of God.”

This is true of us also.

Because as the Lord said to His disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, I am also sending you”. (Jn. 20:21)

Defending the rights of Christ, both in His Church and in this world.

When this life is over and eternity begins, the rights of the Triune God will have been recovered and secured forever without any possibility of those rights being lost again.

The whole issue of the ages will have been fought out, first in Christ and now in us.

In Christ the rights of the Father were incarnated and (for lack of a better way to describe it) locked in.

For now, the battle we face is to take our stand for God's sovereign rule over us and over the Church, and to declare to the world that God has set a date to judge this world in righteousness in the Man He has appointed.

And amazingly, that Man has determined that this New Creation conformed to His image will share in the final judgment of all who had opposed His reign in His kingdom.

(1 Cor. 6: 2-3) “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world . . . Do you not know that we will judge angels?”

(Rev. 2:26-27) “He who overcomes and keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority and power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the earthen pots are broken in pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father.”

As we can increasingly see in the Western Church, the attitude, the spirit of the world is growing in strength - the desire to rule, to do things our way, to neither fully understand or submit to God’s ways and authority.

This atmosphere is constantly pressing against us, trying to move us to a position of compromise and independence from the will of God.

Satan wants (as one author put it) to ‘adapt us to his own ends’. That’s a fight that we must engage in and win. That’s what “overcome” means.

It’s taking a stand of absolute loyalty to God under Job-like pressure to back away from the intensity of the battle.

If we’re going to make this real, then this battle has to be seen as personal – the things we face in daily life. Job is an example of an amazing overcomer, but he didn’t conquer nations or become the king of an empire.

What exactly did he do? He trusted God.

It’s not great spiritual conquests that place us in the camp of the faith heroes in Heb. 11, it’s faith under fire from the enemy.

Every day God sets the stage, defines the roles, places limitations on the enemy and challenges him.

In this cosmic battle between God and Satan being played out in the souls and circumstances of men and women, Satan was forced to watch Job crush him under his feet.

When Job made statements like, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” he was taking a stand for God in the midst of the intense fires of warfare.

This wasn’t seen by the world, only by a few of Job’s friends and his wife. But it was *clearly* seen by the principalities, powers and elect angels all of whom looked on this scene with amazement and with increased understanding of why God created man.

As for Job, he had no idea why he was going through what he was going through. He couldn't see what the spiritual world saw. All he had was his relationship with God.

Job knew that in spite of his confusion and pain, he could trust a God that threw all creation into existence with a word, knowing also that God did this out of love for him on a very personal level.

And rather than explain to Job why all these things had happened to him, God reminded Job about His power and wisdom in creation – and then the Lord blessed Job more than he had ever been blessed before. Power and love reinforced.

What the Lord has added to this for us is the knowledge of the invisible war and the immense significance of that war to the destiny of the New Creation in Christ.

Because of God's revelation to us in the New Testament, we are aware not only of His wisdom and power (Rom. 1) but also of His manifest love in Christ and of the "why" behind the conflict in our lives.

Job didn't know the "why", he only knew the God he had come to trust, even in the deepest mysteries and sufferings of his life.

So, when we face what we face, we need to look far beyond the immediate circumstances and, as Peter says in 1 Pet. 1:13, "gird up the loins of your minds" with a fuller reality than just those things which are below.

We have much greater knowledge of life's meaning and purpose than Job did; we know that each time we take a stand for God in the heat of battle, we defeat Satan, bring honor to God, educate angels, and advance in our own preparation for the throne.

Our lives are not trivial and our circumstances are not meaningless.

Our part in this invisible struggle, then, is to trust that God knows exactly what He's doing and will avenge us upon our enemy.

Listen to how Watchman Nee explains this:

“We do not know what the way of the cross is. We do not realize that all which comes our way is permitted by God. Whatever is against our will, whatever causes us to be misunderstood, makes us suffer, blocks our way, or shatters our hope is a cross given by God to us. Yet how do we face such a thing? Do we resist in heart? Do we complain to people? Do we long to avoid these difficulties?

“Whenever God allows a cross to fall on us, He has a particular reason. Each cross has its spiritual mission, that is to say, it is sent to accomplish something special in our life. If we endure according to God’s will, our natural life will be further dealt with and we shall have a greater capacity for being filled with the resurrection life of the Son.”

The New Creation life is the result of divine power acting from within the sons of God. God’s objective in placing Christ in the position of absolute preeminence over all things will be consummated by the final formation and exaltation of His body, the Church.