

9,22,20

The Coming Shaking of the Church and the Final Object of Worship

We're taking a tangent from Colossians because I don't know how much time we have left and there are things we need to look at while we can.

So, over the next few weeks, we're going to bottom line what our greatest personal, spiritual need is in this time in history. When we speak of the remnant church or the overcomers, we need to be clear on what that is, because most who think they are in that group aren't in it, and many who are in it can't imagine themselves being there.

We will be all over the place in the scriptures, but one thing we definitely have to do is look at sections of the final epistles the churches in Rev. 2 & 3. I won't be breaking everything down in these letters, because many of us have done that together in past studies, but I'll draw out the applications to *our* time of the spiritual conditions discussed in these letters.

We'll see that in every one of the letters the primary characteristic of the overcomer is simply this: they hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches and they respond to the specifics of the warnings as well as solidify their commitment to embrace the spiritual and moral conditions that are praised and encouraged.

Let's begin with a passage in Heb. 12 and one in 1 Pet. 5 that show the 'shaking' or 'testing' that is predicted to come our way and that the Lord, Himself, is going to use the suffering of His people at the end to establish them in the truth.

First, in Heb. 12:26-27

"At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain."

Now, 1 Pet. 5:10

“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”

The earthly shaking was God’s judgment of those in the nation of Israel who did not heed His warning. The heavenly shaking is the judgment of those in the Church who refuse to hear the Spirit at the end of this age.

Those who’s spiritual lives have been built on a solid rock, a foundation that is not made of man-made things, but of things built into us by the Spirit of Christ, will survive the shaking that is coming. Let me share some comments on this section of Hebrews by a commentary on that book;

The earth side of the shaking had a special reference to what was just about to happen in traditional, historic Judaism. The probability is that this letter was written in the year 69, and you know what happened in the year 70. It was a very short distance from the writing of this letter to the destruction of Jerusalem. Some of you will have read Josephus; and if you have, the section on the invasion and destruction of Jerusalem is one of the most terrible things you can read in history. It took place in the year 70, when everything in that Jerusalem was devastated and desolated and the Jews scattered. The earth side was certainly shaken, not only shaken but brought down and devastated. That is the earth side, and this is the prophecy, as you know, taken out of the Old Testament that this would happen.

Christianity, which is the other side; the heaven side, is going to be subjected also to such a shaking. Maybe we will not be far wrong if we say it has begun. It is on, it is proceeding, it is spreading. It is the shaking of Christianity, the shaking of what we may call the heaven side of things, as different from the historic, earthly Israel.

But the point is that there is a universal shaking to take place in the determination of God; in the sovereign ordering of God, a universal

shaking. What for? Here it says in order that there shall be nothing left but what God Himself has established. The things that God has established, are the things and the only things which will ultimately remain, and the shaking is for that purpose.”

Western Christianity, including those we commonly call “the evangelicals”, has become a man-made, earth-bound system of traditions and religious activity.

Even in the development of prophesy updates I listen to, I’m seeing an increase American patriotism and conservatism (because of the values and morals associated with these things) becoming the focus of our commitment, as if being dedicated to the recovery of our nation is the same as being dedicated to the purpose of the Church – the mission of Christ in this world.

Voting and standing firm on righteousness is one thing. Yes, we should vote – the platforms are so obvious now, and we still have the right to influence our culture legally in that way.

But placing the survival of any nation at a level similar to that of bringing the gospel to the world and bringing the Church to maturity, is a dangerous deception.

If you doubt this is where Christianity in America is going, all you have to do is research “The Return” event this year to see the underlying purpose of this movement. It’s not the spiritual life of the Church or a push for greater outreach to the lost in nations who haven’t heard of Christ – it’s a call for the nation to repent of it’s evil and return us to the freedoms and normalcy we knew in the past.

All these people, and thousands of others, spend more time quoting and explaining the Constitution than teaching the Bible. They are encouraging us to fight to save our country from evil.

They seem to believe that the loss of the United States is tantamount to the loss of the spiritual life of the Church – when in reality, it’s more likely that

our loss of freedom would propel the Church into a greater advance of spiritual life and effectiveness than it has ever known.

Don't ever forget what Christ said,

“If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight . . .
“(John 18:36)

That's the kingdom we're to fight for. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood; against Antifa, or Democrats, or Black Lives Matter, or globalists – we fight against principalities and powers. We need to take the fight to our real enemies, but we're too busy fighting the enemy's puppets to even know how to move to the front lines.

We're shocked that our governors are closing churches and BLM is rioting in the streets and Bill Gates wants to chip everyone. And we are told we have to do something to stop all this insanity.

Of course these people are doing these things! That's their job! They're demons and they are *supposed* to do all this. The Antichrist is coming and he needs his minions to prepare the way for him.

But where is the call in all these Christian prayer movements for the spiritually dead evangelical Church in America to repent of *it's* evil – it's superficial, Laodicean, spiritual lukewarmness?

What is Christianity in the West becoming? A morality pushing, conservative-based, patriotic, lukewarm, earth-focused religion with nearly zero spiritual impact on either our true enemies or even the culture they are so shocked by.

They aren't 'winning' anything that ultimately matters – and they don't even know why. Our goal is spiritual growth in Christ, not picketing or blogging against social injustice. As one author put it,

“So often we are in weariness, tiredness, discouragement, despondency, perplexity, disappointment. The enemy's plan is to

take the initiative out of us, and we are inclined to sink down; and then again and again in our spiritual history, we have to gird up the loins of our mind and say: "No, this will not do! This is a cul-de-sac. If I get down here, there is no way through, and the only way is to come out of it and go on." Beware of your cul-de-sacs, your backwaters. Keep on the high road, don't let the world form you into its mold, committed to its causes and distracted from why we are here."

We wouldn't be in this state in our country if the Church had not lost its preservative influence. Jesus said we are the salt of the earth (salt's a preservative), but if the salt loses its savor, it is good for nothing but to be trampled down under the feet of men.

And *that* is what the shaking will involve.

I'll include a link to "The Return" event in the notes I send out; and also, a link to an exposure of it:

<https://thereturn.org/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i75BX1HfGMY>

Ok, that's the end of my soapbox for today. Let's move into hopefully a better understanding of the purpose of Christ in us and ultimately, the purpose of creation itself.

Much of what confuses us as Christians is the bewildering means God is using to reach His goal in us. But I've discovered that the mystery of our lives and circumstances can become much easier to make sense of, if God's ultimate purpose becomes clearer; not to mention the advantage of being able to intelligently cooperate with the Lord in what He's doing.

The revelation of God is now complete. The book of Revelation is both the final as well as the consummate book of the Bible. God's goal is revealed and reached.

For Him, as the eternally present “I am”, it’s a done deal. In Christ, we’ve won – Satan lost. The best he can do is *postpone* his judgement; which he is frantically trying to do, by preventing the Church, God’s administrative arm of judgement against him, from reaching the measure of the stature of Christ.

Once we know where all this is going, we can make sense of the ways God is using to get us there. Understanding His ways is vital but they will always remain a mystery until we understand His ultimate purpose.

So, let’s look at the final outcome of God’s eternal plan by looking at what is at the very end of all God’s working in Revelation 22 – the first few verses.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb . . . and there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face.”

After everything that must be accomplished *is* accomplished, at the center of the universe will be a throne out of which life flows. In Scripture thrones speak of kingship, authority and dominion.

At the consummation of history, as eternity begins, that which will characterize all God has done is represented by a throne.

Why is authority the final criteria of God’s work, of God’s victory? Hasn’t He always been on the throne of heaven?

At some point in eternity past the throne of God was challenged by an angel. Lucifer (now Satan) challenged God’s right to reign supreme and stated his own intent to assume that position of ultimate authority, “*I will ascend . . .*”. (Isa. 14:12-14)

From that time forward, everyone, angels and men, have had to decide for themselves who will be their God. Though there may be a multitude of gods and religions (including the humanistic god of self), ultimately there are only two possibilities – Satan or God.

Jesus is the only way to the Father; there are a multitude of ways to worship Satan.

This is the one thing that runs through the spiritual history of this universe. It is the thing which is behind all that is taking place in the great conflicts happening on this earth and in our lives.

There is no such thing as secular and sacred. There is only the hidden reality of spiritual conflict for the throne.

The Lord has revealed the meaning of humanity's history and in the end, it will be shown to be a spiritual history. Everything in our lives has spiritual significance because everything touches on the issue of the throne of heaven. Who will we serve – who will we worship?

Worship is not simply a matter of singing songs; it is a position of life – a position taken by our will to stand for or against God. *“He that is not for Me, is against Me”* (Matthew 12:30). There is no neutral ground, no alternative stand. The choice to give God His rightful place in us touches everything we do and everything we are.

This is why, during the time of the incarnation, Satan sought above everything else to receive the worship of Jesus; “If you will worship me, I will give you the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them”. And as Representative of God's ultimate purpose, Jesus replied, “Begone, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:9-10).

Whether we realize it or not, this is behind all that exists or ever will exist. Every decision by every intelligent, created being stands on one of these two foundations. It is a position of life. It is a determined stand for all that is of God and a stand against all that is not of Him.

Our lives show our position, our stand, and this stand has a powerful impact on the unseen worlds in ways that will not be completely evident until faith becomes sight.

We are in an immense conflict or warfare that began before time and ends only when, as Paul puts it in 1 Cor. 15:24;

“He (Jesus) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power”

Whether we sing, minister, or work at our jobs, our “worship” is meant to be a challenge to the enemy and a confirmation of our desire to establish the supreme rights of Christ in His people.

“Unto Him be glory *in the church* by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Ephesians 3:21).

At the end of time there is no ‘official’ place of worship. Instead, as Rev. 21:22 states, “*And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it*”.

The temple in eternity is not a building; it’s a spiritual temple comprised of the indwelling of the Lord shining in all His glory through the Church, which Paul tells us is the true, spiritual temple of the living God;

1 Cor. 3:16; “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

Eph. 2:19-22; “Therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

The Church is the temple, the eternal dwelling place of God!

Since our Lord came in His incarnation, God is no longer to be worshipped in this place or that place; *“neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem”* but *“in Spirit and in truth”* (John 4:21-23).

Again, this is very personal for us - this idea of our stand for God in all that we are is *the* conflict of all creation.

Satan has great spiritual discernment. He doesn't care how many people gather for “public worship”. But when even one individual moves toward the exaltation of Christ by his or her life, Satan takes note and moves into action against that person.

Satan is at present “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4) and will do all in his power to retain that position.

God has determined to have unquestioned authority at the end, but in our age, as the final phase of history breaks upon us, the enemy's challenge against that outcome intensifies.

The victory has been won at the cross where “the prince of this world is cast out” in terms of his legal position (John 12:31), but the final application of that victory is not yet completed; the final curtain is not yet drawn on the enemy.

Everything, every detail in the Bible, everything in the history of Man and Angels, everything in our lives personally has to be seen in the light of God's ultimate purpose to establish *“the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb”* as the undisputed Sovereign of the universe.

The centrality of the cross is imperative in this because the cross is the great renunciation and rejection of one race of humanity under Satan just as the resurrection introduces the “First born” of a new race in Christ (Rom. 9:29).

All that we see written in the Scriptures and all we experience in our own lives can only be seen in their full value if they are seen in the context of this great spiritual reality. Who will we serve? Who is our true God?

When we focus on the details to the exclusion of the big picture, we experience limitation, weakness, confusion, denominational agendas, etc.

Where there is no vision the people disintegrate - (Proverbs 29:18); they are weakened and scattered, flying in a million different directions. There is no unity.

When unity is lost, power is lost, because unity of vision and purpose is the foundation of power with God.

All of Satan's activity, assault and deception have one object in view – to turn the heart of man away from the interests of God to our personal interests, just as he did with one-third of the angelic host.

As Paul wrote to the Philippians,

“I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you . . . for I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's” (Phil. 2:19-20).

Our testing is our opportunity to declare our allegiance in spite of all the forces of hell which seek to steal away that allegiance through mistrust in our Lord: As Job demonstrated; “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).

The real issue in any decision we make (including our decision for salvation) is not simply that we escape hell and are assured of heaven, but that God is established as Lord in us and Satan has lost his ground.

As this continues with people being saved and Christians growing in Christ, the Lord's ground is enlarged and Satan's ground shrinks.

Eventually, Satan's place will be forfeit and Christ will be "all in all".

Ultimately there will be no question as to Who is the final object of worship in this universe.

This is the great spiritual drama which God is working out in the unseen worlds. Worship is something that comes down to the very smallest details of life. Who is going to have the supreme place in us?

When we live to the Lord, we enter into active, intelligent cooperation with God in the primary thing for which we exist. We are part of something immense and vast and eternal. Everything that belongs to our Christian life has to be seen in that light.

We have to be related in a living way to what He is accomplishing in the history of His creation. We are called to be co-laborers with Him in answering the prehistoric challenge to the throne of heaven.

"I have come to do Thy will, O God" is the true essence of worship and the mark of sonship;

"Then I said, 'In the volume of the book it is written of Me—Behold, I have come—to do Your will, O God.'" (Heb. 10:7).

This is not just something to be considered or professed; this is a personal stand against all that would question the rights of God in His creation.

Jesus has never been concerned with ritual or tradition or church services or human creativity; He is concerned with the immense principles which govern this universe, "Not My will, but Thy will be done" is both the foundation and increasing character of the life of God's people.

There are two kingdoms watching us with great interest; watching every life on earth, especially those who claim Christ. Each kingdom vies for our allegiance. In the end all will have made their decision.

Everything we are and everything we do will ultimately be evaluated (in other words, its “value” determined) by how much it contributes or takes away from the ultimate purpose of God in creation.

In everything we have to ask ourselves, If I do this, where does it take me? How can I be joined to the Lord in fullness of vision and life – in reality as over against theory? How much of Christ is in this thing? Not how active or enthusiastic or busy or emotionally rewarding or entertaining is it? But how much of Christ is here?

From a book entitled, “The School of Christ”, we read this;

“The mark of a life governed by the Holy Spirit is that such a life is continually and ever more and more occupied with Christ, that Christ is becoming greater and greater as time goes on. The effect of the Holy Spirit’s work in us is to bring us to the shore of a mighty ocean which reaches far, far beyond our range, and concerning which we (are overwhelmed with) the depths of Christ. If we live as long as ever man lived, we shall still be only on the fringes of this vast (wonder) that Christ is.”

Ultimately it all comes down to these words of Paul in Phil. 2:10-11

“That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.”