

CHILDREN TODAY, WARRIORS TOMORROW

by Dale Rumble



When the Lord defined roles and disciplines for the priesthoods and warriors of Israel in the Old Testament, age was a significant factor. Aaron and his sons served in their priesthood to the Lord for as long as they lived. They were responsible for all ministry to the Lord, including the judgment of Israel's sins and for receiving direction from the Lord to the nation. On the other hand, the Levitical priesthood, who were responsible for all service related to the tabernacle, began their

service at age twenty-five and retired at the age of fifty (Numbers 8:24-28). However, young men became warriors in the army at twenty years of age (Numbers 1:2-3).

When one considers all who served Israel in these capacities, the emphasis on youth becomes apparent. The nation's strength lay in the combination of spiritual qualities and wisdom of the Aaronic priesthood with the physical well-being and zeal of the young men in the Levitical priesthood and army. The same emphasis is becoming apparent today in the church as the Lord prepares His people for the days of great darkness and spiritual warfare that are ahead.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

I do not believe in setting a date for the Lord's return. However, it should be apparent to a student of scripture that we are living in the last days. In fact, I am persuaded 1988 was the first year of the last (forty year) generation that will close this age of grace.

The history of the previous generation, beginning in 1948, was certainly significant relative to end time events. The Latter Rain revival, which began in February, saw restoration of new dimensions in spiritual worship, new reality in the laying on of hands, as well as prophetic promises of apostles and prophets. In May of the same year, Israel became a nation and, in July, the World Council of Churches met for the first time. Halfway through this generation, the charismatic renewal began in many denominations; Jerusalem became a part of Israel; and the Western world was invaded by demon spirits associated with the drug scene and Hindu based teachings of gurus and swamis from the Far East. The last ten to fifteen years of the generation saw a new spirit of expectation begin to arise in the hearts of many leaders for a return to the pattern and life of the early church. This was marked by the emerging of a small number of apostles and prophets, particularly the latter. In 1975, Satan's strategy for the end times began to become apparent in the New Age Movement. Finally in October of 1987, the last year of the generation, Israel began a year of Jubilee. This was the first possible Jubilee since A.D. 27, a gap of forty Jubilee periods! Thus, the church, Israel and Satan's forces of evil completed forty years marked by great and accelerating changes, and in 1988 they began a new generation which, in my opinion, will see the day of the Lord come to pass and thereby close this present age.

What lies ahead for the church can be expressed in three ways:

1. From Satan's point of view she will be a mighty army against him under the leadership of the Lord Jesus.

2. For those who turn to the Lord away from the darkness enveloping the world, she will be a place of refuge and salvation. The greatest ingathering ever by the church will take place with multitudes being brought into the kingdom (Joel 2:32; 3:14; Isaiah 60:1-5).

3. From the Lord's viewpoint she will be His bride who has prepared herself for His return (Revelation 19:7-8). All who the world sees as Christian do not necessarily belong to Him, for there are tares among the wheat. The Lord will send reapers to pull out these tares in the days ahead so that His glory can shine forth from the church. Thus, there will

also be a falling away by many in today's Christendom whose hearts were never wholly given to Him (Matthew 13:24-43; Matthew 24:10-13; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

THE ARMY OF THE LORD

The grace and the power of God upon believers at the end of this age, as well as the forces of evil against them, will be greater than in any previous generation. The church that endures and stands in the spiritual warfare of that day will not be like traditional churches today; these saints will be wholly committed to the Lord and move as a disciplined army under His command (Joel 2:1-11; Ezekiel 37:7-10).

As with Israel in the past, youth will play a key role in the Lord's army. The Hebrew word "CHAYIL", which is sometimes translated as "power" or "strength", literally means "army", and is so translated in the following verses which describe the Lord's army of these days.

*The Lord will stretch forth thy **strong** scepter from Zion, saying, "rule in the midst of thine enemies." Thy people will volunteer freely (literally: thy people WILL BE FREE WILL OFFERINGS) in the day of thy army; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, thy youth are to thee as the dew.*
(Psalms 110:1-3)

Verse 3 is translated as follows in the AMPLIFIED BIBLE:

Your people will offer themselves willingly in the day of Your power (army), in the beauty of holiness and in holy array, out of the womb of the morning; to You will spring forth Your young men who are as the dew.

How does one prepare youth in the church to fulfill their place in His army? This is the question I am seeking to answer. I am not dealing with the subject of how to raise Christian children; my purpose is to point out those *additional* areas of training that are necessary to equip young believers to become warriors in the Lord's army. For example, "free will offering" implies total commitment and "holy array" (literally, "the beauty of holiness") speaks of godly character, both of which are vital areas of training.

Who should be trained? The twenty-to-thirty-year olds at the end of the 90's are the ten to twenty year olds today; teenagers at that time are three to nine year-olds today. Since we don't know the year of His return, children of all ages are candidates. And such training must necessarily include the parents!

The following verses offer a glimpse of the ministry of youth in the Lord's army as we approach the day of the Lord.

Your sons and your daughters will prophecy . . . your young men will see visions . . . And I will display wonders in the sky and on earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered . . . (Joel 2:30-32)

EQUIPPING THE YOUTH

Because of the Lord's great grace in the coming days of harvest, there will be some young people saved whom the Lord will sovereignly bring forth quickly into His service much as He called Jeremiah to be a prophet (Jeremiah.1:6-10). However, this will not be the norm; parents and church leaders are responsible to equip and prepare their youth for the time of darkness ahead.

While there will probably be other specific directions from the Holy Spirit, the following are principles and disciplines that I believe are important:

THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

This is the most important principle and is a foundation for all the others that follow. Its importance lies in the fact that it addresses the responsibility of parents and spiritual fathers to raise up and equip the youth. The spirit of Elijah that rested upon John the Baptist was an *essential* requirement for the Lord's first advent. John's ministry prepared the way of the Lord. The spirit of Elijah is also necessary to restore and prepare the church for His second coming. This spirit is the basis of spiritual restoration, and it concerns the relationship of fathers to their children, both natural and spiritual.

*Behold, I am going to send you **Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their (the) children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest I come and smite the land with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)*

*And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He answered and said, "**Elijah is coming and will restore all things**; but I say to you, that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him (i.e., as John the Baptist)" (Matthew 17:10-12)*

Unless fathers, and particularly spiritual fathers, have hearts to raise up sons who will excel them in spiritual stature and excellence of ministry, church restoration can not be completed and the bride of Christ will not be prepared for her Lord. Just as church history is a picture of declension in spiritual qualities, as truth after truth was abandoned over the years, so also have recent generations experienced a spiritual ascension as much truth earlier lost has been and is being restored (Acts 3:19-21).

Church leaders of the past were responsible for the falling away and spiritual fathers in leadership today bear primary responsibility for the final steps in restoration. They require the spirit of Elijah to rest upon them as it did upon John the Baptist to accomplish the task.

But there is a crippling bottle neck in many local churches today. It exists with the leader who is the final authority figure of the assembly. Because of his governmental position, he is responsible for all ministry in the church. He has security in his office of spiritual overseer. The mind-set of many is, how can I permit young men to be raised up in ministries that would transcend mine? How should I, with a pastor's heart, handle the emerging of a young prophet or apostle whose grace and anointing was obvious to all? The need for change in contemporary models of leadership becomes apparent if apostles and prophets are to be restored to local assemblies.

Local churches need desperately to return to the biblical pattern of government based on the five-fold ministries of Ephesians 4:11. A new generation of servant leaders with these five ministry graces are required to equip the saints for their place of service in the Lord's army (Ephesians 4:11-16). These would not be men whose hearts are filled with goals and traditions of the past, but men with hearts full of expectation to see the glory of the Lord's presence in a restored church. I am convinced that the next decade will see many prophets and apostles emerge in the church. However, for this to happen, men in leadership today require the heart of Elijah and a vision of the Lord's purpose for His church.

The greatest miracle Elijah accomplished took place during the years when he built into Elisha the truths, the lessons he had learned and the spiritual ministry that God had developed in him. After this time of discipling, when Elisha came forth as a prophet under the anointing and mantle that had rested upon his mentor, he demonstrated a greater excellence of ministry by performing twice as many miracles as Elijah, and he did so without the character flaws of his spiritual father (i.e., fear of Jezebel and self-pity).

If leaders in churches would ask the Lord for the same motivation that Elijah had in discipling Elisha, there would emerge young men in the five-fold ministries with great anointing and godly character; men able to equip the saints and prepare the army of the Lord for the battles ahead.

The heart of the Lord, however, is **not** that there should be a fading away of fathers in the church as strong, young ministries emerge. His heart is that **both** come forth together in God's purpose for this day. Just as Caleb and Joshua went into the promised land **TOGETHER** with the young of the next generation, so the Lord wants the young and the older ones to join hands and hearts and go forth together! It is the zeal of youth with the wisdom of age that will be the basis of strength in the church, just as with the priests and warriors of ancient Israel.

Clearly, fathers must do more than verbally instruct the young. It has been said that one who only *hears* truth will forget it; one who *sees* truth in action will remember it; but one who *obeys* truth, understands and possesses it. Thus, fathers in the church are to *teach* the young, while **being an example** of what they teach and **participating with** them in ministry. The sower and the reaper going forth together is the heart of the Lord!

A righteous man who walks in his integrity, how blessed are his sons after him. (Proverbs 20:7)

INTERCESSION

It should not be necessary to amplify the need to intercede for our young people; a burden that begins with the birth of each child. One who grows up seeing the fruit of prayers for him by parents and others, will recognize that intercessory prayer is indispensable in spiritual warfare.

THE BATTLE STRATEGY FOR THE LORD'S WARRIORS IS TWO FOLD:

- **Intercessory prayer**, knowing that it is the Lord Who does the fighting and that we will overcome through Him for He will never leave nor forsake us.
- **Obedience** out of a heart of humility.

OVERSIGHT AND TRAINING

Traditional oversight of youth in churches has tended to focus on preparing them to walk in righteousness as adults, while insulating and protecting them from warfare with the forces of evil. Because of the vi-

cious and rapidly growing onslaught of the enemy against children, this must change. There is not one set of spiritual gifts for adults and another set for children. The Holy Spirit can reveal the Lord and expose the evil one to the hearts of children just as He does in adults.

Honest and clear instruction on what lies ahead for the church should be part of youth training, so that young believers can intelligently commit themselves wholeheartedly to the Lord and His purpose for their lives. They must understand that theirs is a generation of decision, before whom God has drawn a line in the sand called **“love of truth;”** every person must choose to be on one side or the other (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Those who will love the truth and serve the Lord, should be taught how deeply He loves them and that He will ***never leave nor forsake them.*** They are His precious treasures.

The youth must be taught and prepared to walk in a society destined to become one of the most ungodly in mankind’s history (Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3; Jude 17-23). It is for this same society that they will be equipped with the mercy and grace of God to evangelize; loving and caring for those who turn to the Lord. They will be part of those workers hired and sent into His vineyard at the eleventh hour (Matthew 20:1-16).

Young people should not be viewed as “second class” members of the church, but be honored as a specific and important part of the body of Christ. It is often little things that show honor. For example, referring to them as “young adults” rather than “teenagers”. Another example would be to provide resources for seminars and retreats with youth from other assemblies.

Oversight for youth meetings should be sensitive to how the Holy Spirit would move rather than following a fixed format. Where possible, and when appropriate, leadership input should come from the more mature of the youth. ***As the older youth respond to the Lord they become role models for the young ones to emulate.***

The transition to participating in body ministry with adults in the central meetings is often difficult for young believers. This is made easier when they are also active in a home church as well youth meetings. Because the crowd is smaller and the format more informal, the atmosphere in home meetings is less likely to make younger members self-conscious.

EQUIPPED AGAINST THE FORCES OF DARKNESS

It is unfortunate that many Christians never fully understand the reality of demons and their spheres of influence until adulthood, and often only then through unfortunate experiences. It is *vital* that today's young people are prepared to stand against the deceptions of Satan for it is they whom he has targeted for destruction, just as he attempted to thwart the purpose of God in Moses and Jesus by destroying multitudes of children. His assault on the unsaved youth today is devastating, widespread and growing at an alarming rate. Satan's tools of deception include music (metallic hard rock and subliminal recorded messages); drugs; the occult; fantasy role playing games, such as Dungeons and Dragons; witchcraft and even Satanism.

These are part of a strategy that Satan has evolved by which he will eventually, for a season, be worshiped as God in the world (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 13:8-18). This can only take place through massive deception that touches every sphere of society, including commerce, education, the media, politics, religion, medicine, etc. This is *precisely* what the New Age Movement is all about! Much of the activity of this movement does not **appear** to be evil and is attractive to those in the world. For example, the currently popular theme of self in promoting success in the secular world (self-love, self-esteem, self actualization, etc.), which places self instead of God on the throne in individual lives, is a major door way into the New Age Movement.

One of the **first** lessons to be learned by the youth in this area is that the battleground with Satan is the human mind (2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 2:8).

*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying **speculations** (i.e., imaginations, philosophies, fantasies, etc.) and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every THOUGHT captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)*

Another important lesson to be learned is that wherever there are idols, there will be demons! When one brings an idol into his life, that person opens a door for demonic activity. In this country, the issue is not idols of stone or wood, nor is it idols associated with living creatures (such as snakes or cows as in Hinduism). The issue in our land of affluence is *greed* and *covetousness*.

*Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and **greed** which amounts to **idolatry**. (Colossians 3:5)*

*For this you know with certainty that no immoral or impure person or **covetous** man who is an **idolater** has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Ephesians 5:5)*

It is not only material things one may covet; it can be carnal desire for a place of ministry or a position in the church. Any doctrinal emphasis, organization, ministry or minister, that occupies a place of esteem and influence in some one's life above that of the Lord Jesus, is an idol to that person. And wherever there is an idol, there will be demonic influence! This is why the Lord declares in His word (Psalms 110:1-3) that those who make up His army will be "free will offerings to Him;" that is they will have no allegiance before Him in their lives.

I urge you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice to God . . . do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is . . . (Romans 12:1-2)

SELF SUPPORT

What lies ahead for the youth in persecutions, challenges, world conditions, as well as grace for ministry, will not be like that of their fore-fathers. All will be new; the future will *not* be like the past!

The professional and spectator roles of clergy and laity will fade away. The body of Christ is being raised up as a mighty man in the earth; as an army for the Lord to move through.

The local church will become the Lord's seminary as it was in the early church. Here the saints will be equipped for service and ministries raised up (Ephesians 4:11-16). This involves more than learning theology; it is an "on the job" syllabus of developing godly character, relational integrity, accountability, and learning to minister under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. While there may be some locations prepared for spiritual training, youth should **NOT** plan to attend Bible schools or seminaries. This period of time in their lives should be spent on secular training so that they are equipped to support themselves, as necessary, in their service for Christ. To support one's self by secular work as a minister of the Lord is not a lack of faith; on the contrary, it is an act of faith for these who are bond-servants.

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

Parents ought to teach their children in early childhood that an angel of the Lord is always near to protect them. Once they have this knowledge, the Lord will often open their eyes to see the angel. This reinforces their faith in the Lord's care for them, and it also prepares them for the possible ministry of angels in their later years of serving the Lord. Each major historical period of God's dealings with His people is marked by the ministry of angels. I expect the closing years of this age of grace to experience the greatest manifestation of angelic ministry ever seen as the Lord works through His armies in heaven and on earth (Hebrews 1:3-4; Revelation 8:2; 12:7-9; 19:14).

EQUIPPED TO MINISTER THE POWER OF GOD

It is often taught that to minister the power of God, one only need be baptized in the Holy Spirit and have faith in the promises found in the word of God. If results do not follow, *then the hearers must have lacked faith*. The fault may, indeed, be with the ones being ministered to at times; however, a frequent reason for failure is that ministers only view God's power from a human (need-oriented) perspective, while ignoring certain truths that apply to those who represent Him in ministry.

The following are some **divine perspectives** on His power that can help young believers to develop more effective ministry. They are based on the assumption that the one ministering is baptized in the Holy Spirit and is moving in *militant faith and boldness*.

- Any power *without control* can be both dangerous and destructive. This is true whether it is engine, explosive, political, military or Holy Ghost power. God requires such control in His ministers; He has a name for this control, it is called "**HUMILITY.**" God extends grace to the humble to release His power in ministry, but He withholds it from the proud. Faith will **never** over ride the lack of this control.
- When Jesus ministered the power of God in healing the sick, casting out demons and working miracles, He never acted just to demonstrate the supernatural. His object was not simply to perform sensational signs and wonders. He was moved by *compassion* for the needy, the afflicted and those in demonic bondage. He ministered power out of a heart of **mercy** and **love**. His *character* was the motivation for His ministry of deliverance. A vital step in preparation for ministering the power of God is to pray that the Lord's burden will become the unction in one's ministry; "Lord,

give me Your heart of compassion and love for those to whom You send me.”

- God’s power is made perfect (completed, fulfilled) through human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Whether one is normal, highly talented or handicapped has very little relevance in ministering with power. It is totally a matter of God’s grace, which He dispenses as He sees fit so that the glory comes to Him. He is often honored most and glorified when the vessel He uses is one who men would not choose. The Lord is committed to destroy the pride of man and the place of flesh in His church. Youth must be established in the truth that the power which God will manifest in the end times will be **clearly seen as coming from Him!** It will not be the work of super-ministers or come from the minds and programs of men.

There will be some situations when one simply does not know the heart of God. At such times, a minister must be willing to become vulnerable to His sovereignty. Some for whom we may have no hope will be saved; and others who we thought would prove faithful will fall away (Romans 9:15-28). Only God knows what is in the hearts of men! To equip one in ministry is to train that person **to obey** the Lord, not how “to be right or to look good” in ministry. We are to have compassion on the sick and afflicted and to pray in faith for them; but only the Lord can heal them. Scripture should *never* be taught or employed in ministry in an attempt to manipulate God to action.

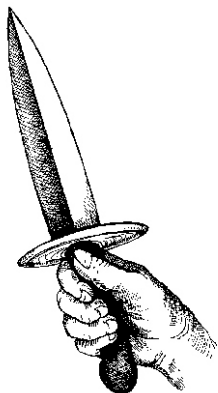
A policeman with only authority (a badge and uniform) but without power (a gun) would not be effective. The same is true for an army, and it is also true in the kingdom of God. The authority of God has been invested in His Son, with His power resident in the Holy Spirit; and these two are **always** linked together in ministry. If one seeks to minister in the power of God without being subject to His authority, he would minister confusion to the people. In contrast, one who submits to the Lord’s will for his life, is a candidate for His power. Submission to the Lord’s authority is what places a believer into the right calling at the right church at the right time with the right vision.

These five principles concerning the power of God primarily point to one thing, **GODLY CHARACTER**. Above all else, **RIGHTEOUSNESS AND INTEGRITY** will mark this new generation of warriors the Lord is raising up; and because of this, great power will rest upon them!

CONCLUSION

What should our response be to these things? If our heart is to see restored to the church what the swarming locust, the creeping locust and the gnawing locust have destroyed; if we hunger for unity in the body of Christ; if we recognize the days in which we live and are committed to our place in the Lord's army; if we are willing to rise to the challenge of equipping the youth for their place, what is our next step? The prophet Joel has the answer, with the words that specifically apply to this generation.

*... return to me with all your heart, and with **fasting, weeping, and mourning**: ... Blow a trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants*
(Joel 2:12, 15-16)



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