

*Restoration,
Glory
&
The Salvation
Of Israel*

by Dale Rumble

Introduction

It is very discouraging when one is daily bombarded by news reports of lawlessness, wars, Islamic terrorism, nuclear testing, national disasters, pestilence, etc. It is wise to step back and look into God's word and be reminded of how everything will turn out in the end.

God has promised to fill the earth with His glory (Habakkuk 2:14). He will restore His church to a place of spiritual maturity in His Son. The glory of God will rise upon His people, resulting in a wonderful harvest of souls from all nations; and Israel will be saved!

This tract has been written as a brief outline of the glorious events that lie ahead, and how glory will triumph over darkness.

God's Olive Tree

God has expressed His plan of redemption in terms of an olive tree. Salvation is based on the covenant that He made with Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:6-9, 13-16). Abraham believed the promises God made to him and God imputed His righteousness to Abraham on the basis of his faith. Abraham thus became the father of all who would thereafter believe God. This covenant is the root of the olive tree, and it supports all truth in both the Old and New Testaments.

However, the root alone cannot produce fruit, God's plan of redemption requires His mercy and grace, which is represented by the trunk of the tree. The branches of the tree are the children of God, those who through faith have believed God (Romans 4:9-17). They bear spiritual fruit (olive oil is a type of the Holy Spirit). The life in the root that nourishes the branches to bear fruit is true faith in God's promises, in particular, faith in the promised seed of Abraham, the Messiah, through whom all nations on earth will be blessed. He is God's Branch of salvation (Isaiah 4:2; Zechariah 3:8).

God chose the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, who became the nation of Israel, to be His people. They were charged to walk by faith in the Abrahamic covenant. Because Israel failed to do so, after 430 years God added the Mosaic covenant for them to keep. It did *not* replace or invalidate the covenant with Abraham; it was given so that the Law would reveal the utter sinfulness of the human heart, and thereby become a tutor to prepare

the nation for their promised Messiah (Galatians 3:16-19, 23-24; Romans 7:9-13). Through Law is the knowledge of sin.

When the Son of God, the Messiah, came to Israel, the nation as a whole rejected Him. Those who did not believe were broken off as branches of the olive tree. The good news of God's promises were then proclaimed to the Gentiles. Those who believed were grafted into the olive tree as wild branches (Romans 11:17-21).

One cannot become a child of God through genealogy; it can only take place through faith in the Messiah, the promised seed of Abraham (Romans 9:6-8). The church is the whole company of those from all nations who are children of God. The church did not replace Israel; she is both a fulfillment and a continuation of the Abrahamic covenant.

The love of God for His creation was expressed when His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, willingly died a substitutionary death for the sins of all mankind. His incredible sacrifice has opened the door of grace for every person to believe the gospel and to be saved.

Christ is the supreme center for all things in the church. He is the cornerstone on which the church is built; in Him all believers are being fitted together as living stones to become a dwelling of God in the Spirit. He is head over all things to the church and the Lord of each believer. The church is not an organization of good people, it is a supernatural organism in the Spirit; it is the body of Christ where each member is called to a specific place of service. God intends to display His glory to the world through the church. This can only take place when Christ is in His rightful place in the lives and relationships of believers. God is going to sum up all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

Glory of the Early Church

The secret for how God will display His glory in the earth is found in how He revealed His glory through the early church. Apostles and prophets were raised up and anointed to build believers together in the Holy Spirit as living expressions of the body of Christ. There was no church for Jews only or for Gentiles only. There was just one church, the body of Christ!

Peter was called to be an apostle to the Jews, while Paul was called as an apostle to the Gentiles. Their epistles, together with epistles of other apostles, jointly make up the New Testament. There were no epistles written for only Jews, or for only Gentiles. New Covenant believers are respon-

sible to walk in all New Testament truth. There is one Lord, one body and one faith!

Someone has said that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, while the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. An example of this truth is found in how the pattern given by God to Moses (by which he was to build the Tabernacle) is a type or shadow of how to spiritually build the church.¹

Another example is how the blood sacrifices of animals in the Old Testament foreshadowed the blood shed by the Lamb of God at Calvary.

A very important issue had to be faced by the early church. The nation of Israel had become meticulous in keeping, not only the Law of Moses, but also many other related laws that the priests had laid on the people over the years. Any degree of excellence that the people saw in their relationship with God was in terms of keeping laws, rather than on the condition of their hearts. The very first believers in the church were Jewish, and it was essential for them to face the issue that righteousness was received through faith in the Messiah, and not by an obligation to keep laws. This distinction was an essential truth in the foundation of the church.

God uniquely prepared and called Paul to be the apostle whose words, more than those of the other apostles, would make this distinction clear. There were four constituents, to Paul's preparation, as follows:

1. His unexcelled education in Judaism as a lawyer and a Pharisee. The next three concerned the Lord's personal interface with Paul.
2. The words of Jesus to Paul that led to his conversion on the road to Damascus.
3. Following his salvation, Paul spent three years in the desert, where the Lord Jesus revealed the gospel to him (Galatians 1:11-12) In time, Paul confirmed the gospel he had received with Peter and James..
4. Paul went to Tarsus where he spent seven years preaching the gospel in the Cilicia/Syria regions. Near the beginning of this era, Paul was caught up to the third heaven and experienced visions and revelations from the Lord (Galatians 1:18-21; 2 Corinthians 12:1-5).

Barnabus came to Tarsus and took Paul with him to Antioch. From here Paul began his apostolic ministry as recorded in his epistles.

Apostolic foundations for the church required revelation of truth that had been hidden from past generations (Ephesians 3:1-11). This truth is centered in the indwelling Holy Spirit by whom Christ comes to live in

His people, and by whom they become His body. The glory of the Holy Spirit far surpasses the glory that came with the giving of the Law.

For if the ministry of condemnation (the Law) has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. (2 Corinthians 3:9-10)

A major part of Paul's apostolic ministry was dealing with rudiments of the Law in the lives of Jewish believers. Paul had been well prepared by God for the many controversies that he had to face. He knew that Christ had come to fulfill and to put away the Law as a means of righteousness (Ephesians 2:15). The covenant of the Law became obsolete when Christ died on the cross (Hebrews 8:13). It was set aside because of its weakness and uselessness to make anything perfect (Hebrews 7:18-19).

Although Paul did not personally walk under the Law, he always honored the Law when he was with his countrymen who had not come to faith in the Messiah (1 Corinthians 9:20).

The basic truth that Paul continually emphasized was that believers must be firmly rooted in Christ, being led by and built up in the Holy Spirit. This is not possible when they allow human traditions and edicts of the Law to replace the grace of God. They must find their identity in Christ, not in race, gender or Jewish tradition (Galatians 3:26-28). The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets believers free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

The following words from Paul's epistles are an apostolic voice to all New Testament believers today, whether they are Gentile or Jew:

One person regards one day above another, another person regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. (Romans 14:5)

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. (Galatians 4:9-10)

. . . one person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. (Romans 14:2)

Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience sake. (1 Corinthians 10:25)

I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything is unclean, to him it is unclean. (Romans 14:14)

To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. (Titus 1:5)

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:7)

The conscience of one who is pure in heart is a bridle of the Holy Spirit leading him in the way of righteousness. Another major issue in righteousness to Paul was the significance of circumcision.

Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law For in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. (Galatians 2:2, 3, 6)

*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. **But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter** (Romans 2:28-29)*

The circumcision of Abraham in his covenant with God was a shadow of the true circumcision that is received in Christ (Philippians 3:3).

And in Him you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; . . . having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (Colossians 2:11-13)

Whether it is a matter of righteousness, relationship, ministry or vision, the pattern for restoring the church today must be that which is defined in the New Testament. Everything is to be centered in Christ!

The early church was birthed and built as a spiritual organism. Each assembly was a local expression of the body of Christ, that was overseen and shepherded by a collegial eldership (1 Peter 5:1-3; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7). There was no headquarters and no hierarchy; all authority came from above in the Lordship and headship of Christ.

Believers were knit together by bonds of fellowship, usually in small groups that met in homes. Gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit, prayer, preaching the word of God and evangelism marked their times of

fellowship (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31). The early church turned the known world of that day upside-down as the gospel of the kingdom was proclaimed everywhere in the power of God.

However, the glory was not to last. About fifty years after the death of Paul, the church entered into spiritual decline as men began to assume authority over the government and life of the church. Spiritual organism slowly drifted into hierarchical organization as church leaders adopted models of the Gentile business and military worlds in place of the spiritually organic structure of the body of Christ. Bishops replaced apostles; elderships were replaced by a pastor; the universal priesthood of believers was replaced by the concept of clergy and laity, where the clergy were considered priests; and the headship of Christ was replaced by programs and agendas of leaders. This declension deepened, and after many years entered into the Dark Ages. The one body of Christ became a scenario of competing denominations. True believers and Jews were persecuted, even unto death. Anti-Semitism was promoted by many church leaders. The glory of the early church was changed from the centrality of Christ, holiness, power and unity into centrality of the institution, religious offices, titles and liturgy that were displayed in great cathedrals.

However, there was always a company of believers who sought reform and a return to the purity and simplicity of the gospel. This was the heart of church restoration.

Restoration and Harvest

God began to restore His church in the Reformation, a work of the Holy Spirit that continues today in anticipation of the following three great events before Christ's returns:

- The church is prepared as a bride, ready for her Lord's return.
- The nation of Israel is saved.
- A great harvest of souls is gathered in from every nation. The harvest is the end of the age (Matthew 13:39).

The truths and principles used by Christ to build the early church will be restored. One obvious need is for apostolic men to emerge who have the vision and character of Paul. The glory of the latter house will be greater than the former. In addition, future restoration will take place during deepening darkness and persecution. It will be a time of great tribula-

tion. Even now the evil of Islamic terrorism is beginning to emerge worldwide; a sign of what is to come.

Let us consider the salvation of Israel. The words of Peter, the apostle, makes it clear that restoration in the church must come first.

*Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, **whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.** (Acts 3:19-21)*

When Israel rejected her Messiah, a veil was placed over her heart; one that can only be removed in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14-15). The people of Israel were scattered to other nations. Israel was broken off as natural branches from God's olive tree. However, there is the promise of restoration! Israel will be saved, and her people grafted back into the olive tree along with the wild branches of Gentile believers (Romans 11:23-24).

There is a divine preface to when this will take place. In 1948, Israel again became a nation. In the same year, the Latter Rain revival brought new light to the church. Many healing ministries were raised. In a short time, Jerusalem became part of Israel, while the church was renewed by the charismatic revival. Restoration of the church and the salvation of Israel are linked together.

God has promised to return the Jews back to Israel from the many lands to which they had been scattered, and in time, to restore them spiritually (Ezekiel 36:22-38). A growing influx of returning Jews is now taking place. Some Christian churches are interceding for Israel and assisting in the return. Messianic congregations are appearing in Israel.

Restoration of the church is also growing. The annual growth of Christianity worldwide has increased over the past fifty years from around 2% to 8%. Spiritual gifts are becoming common. There is a worldwide movement towards house churches. This trend is a vital restoration to support spiritual fellowship and to develop body ministry. The greatest evidence of church restoration is to be found in China. There are well over 100 million believers in that nation. The underground church is much like the early church in evangelism, relationship and structure. These qualities have largely been the result of intense persecution.

These marks of restoration in the church are the proper context in which to consider the following scripture:

*. . . a partial hardening has happened to Israel **until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in**; and so all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:25-26)*

The word “fulness” is translated from the Greek word, PLEROMA, which means “a completion.” Thus, a fulness in quality (and possibly quantity) of Gentile believers will precede the salvation of Israel. This is in harmony with the promise of restoration in Acts 3:19-21.

It is important to recognize that both the church and Israel are in the process of restoration. The church should stand in support of Israel, for she will not be complete until Israel is saved.

The recent war in Lebanon reminds us of the very difficult times of persecution that lay ahead for Israel until the glorious day of her salvation.

However, tribulation also awaits the church. The antichrist will appear before the return of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8). There are many who preach an “easy escapism” through a pre-tribulation rapture, but this is not the way of restoration. God uses the fires of affliction and suffering to purify His people (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 4:12-13).

For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory . . . ! (2 Corinthians 4:17)

We are called to endure, to overcome and to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29). This is how we gain glory. The fire of God is going to test the quality of every man’s work (1 Corinthians 3:11-13). The days ahead will be a time when deception and lawlessness increases, when wars, natural disasters, persecution and martyrdom will abound (Matthew 24:3-14).

What may appear to be an era of distress and defeat is actually the scenario for restoration and glory. For as darkness deepens in the world, the glory of the Lord will rise upon His people in a great display of power and mercy. He will shake the powers in heaven and on earth, and He will shake all nations to gather in a great end-time harvest of souls (Haggai 2:6-7; Hebrews 12:25-29). The contrast between good and evil will increase. The prophet Isaiah described this time as follows:

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about and see; they will gather together, they come to you Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice, because the

abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you. (Isaiah 60:1-5)

Verses six and seven of this prophecy reveal an ingathering of souls from Islamic lands.

Just as the glory of God attracts the lost to Christ, the Lord will also use the deception of darkness to remove all tares from His kingdom (Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12). The way of restoration includes both glory and darkness; purification requires trials and tribulation.

Conclusion

I have written this brief outline of what lies ahead for the people of God with specific emphasis on the following six issues:

1. The church is being restored to a glory that will exceed the glory of the early church. She will be prepared as a bride for her Lord.
2. The nation of Israel is also in a process of restoration; one that will lead to her salvation following a restored fulness to Gentile believers.
3. The church should stand with Israel. It would appear that the love, compassion and power of God extended to Israel from a restored church will make her jealous, and so bring Israel to faith in her Messiah (Romans 11:11-14). However, Israel must find her identity in Him, and not in the Law of Moses. This should be the primary emphasis of Messianic ministry.
4. A necessary aspect of refinement and restoration for both the church and Israel will be the growing persecution and tribulation in the world that will force God's people to forsake their own ways and return to Him with all of their hearts. God will use the deception of darkness to remove tares from His kingdom. He will test the quality of everything built in His name.
5. The heart of church restoration will not be better ecumenism, but in the active reality of the lordship and headship of Christ. The distinction of clergy and laity will fade away as believers find their place and call in the body of Christ. Valid apostolic ministries will arise to lay foundations for the centrality of Christ in churches.

6. God will use natural disasters (such as hurricane Katrina) and tribulations as He shakes the nations. He will also use disasters that are political or religious in origin. The glory of God upon the church will draw a great company of souls into the kingdom. God's olive tree will cover the earth. This final harvest will be fulfillment of the Old Testament Feast of Tabernacles. I believe that those nations who support Israel will experience a greater visitation of God.

It is a time of decision. These six issues call for commitments to the great work of restoration that leads to our Lord's return.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:14)

References

1. BUILD ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN, a Fountain of Life tract, Dale Rumble

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