

Session 5: A Different Environment

I. As in the Days of Samuel

- a. This session is the first of the second part of this class—the spiritual environment of an eternal purpose church. Whereas the first four sessions laid the foundation for an eternal purpose church, the next five sessions establish different aspects of the spiritual environment which must be created in order for an eternal purpose church to arise in fullness. We will begin this part of the class and this session by taking a glimpse at the days of Samuel which were days of great transition and restoration in the life of Israel.

1. The global church is once again living in the days of Samuel.

- a. During the days in which Samuel lived, which were a time of great compromise in Israel's religious system, Samuel was used to transition Israel from the time of the judges to the age of Israel's kings. The period of the judges was a time in which it is recorded that the people did what was right in their own eyes. In fact, the book of Judges ends with this verse, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25).
- b. For approximately 300 to 400 years, judges ruled Israel. However, with the coming forth of Samuel who was the last significant judge in the land came a transition from the rule of the judges to the rule of the kings. The coming of Samuel signified a time of transition but also a time of restoration (Acts 3:19-24). It was a time for a new beginning for God's people ultimately leading to David becoming king.
- c. The days of Samuel were a day in which there was great compromise in the religious system, governmental unrest in the land, and the need for a new order to bring the people back to greater devotion to God. As much as we wished it were different, we find that we live in days much like the days of Samuel. The church is in very great compromise, the world is in chaos, and church leaders are attempting to impact the corrupt culture through the sanctioning of lukewarmness and lawlessness.
- d. Once again God is calling globally for the Hannahs to birth the Samuels who will bring in a new order and a new way of doing church—to build a church with a different kind of spiritual environment, one based on God's eternal purpose. Let's make no mistake about it. We live in a day in which God is calling His remnant church to a time of MAJOR change. This is not a time to put a minor patch on what we are currently doing but a time for a complete stripping of the old leading to the re-clothing of the church with the new, fresh garments of God's eternal purpose.
- e. To do this will require a radically different environment in our churches. In the second half of this session, we will identify ten areas of change in spiritual environment which must be emphasized in an eternal purpose church. However, first we want to draw a few points from the life and ministry of Samuel to set the stage for the great need for change. I want to make one very important point before we move on. THE OLD ORDER IS DYING. IF WE HOLD ONTO THE OLD, WE WILL BE SWEEPED AWAY BY WHAT IS COMING TO THE EARTH IN OUR GENERATION. We believe that time is of the essence and there is no longer time to delay and no longer time to continue in the old order. Transition is coming whether we join in or not. However, in His great mercy, God is inviting all of His people to leave the old order and join in the new.

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2. The Book of 1 Samuel paints a clear picture of the days of transition in which we live.

- a. There are a lot of types and shadows illustrated through the life and ministry of Samuel. The characters in the book illustrate a wide variety of truths on a number of subjects. If you see another shadow in the book that I don't address, then know that the book does illustrate several key truths. I limit my explanation to the application of transition that is being called for by God in our day.
- b. You know the story from your days in Sunday School. A man named Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah had a lot of children but Hannah was barren. Hannah longed for a child and told the Lord if He would grant her desire, she would dedicate him to the Lord. Samuel was God's answer to her travail. During the time Elkanah and his family went to Shiloh to present their offerings, Eli was the judge and high priest. Eli had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were also priests. Even though they were serving in the tabernacle, they were corrupt, immoral, and self-seeking. Eli was not so much corrupt as old, lazy, and allowed the corruption without bringing needed correction to his sons and the people. Compromise characterized his ministry.
- c. In our picture, Elkanah's two wives represent the church of our day. One was self-satisfied with everything she needed. She had many children and plenty of food. She represents the flourishing church of our day that is content with the way things are. On the other hand, Hannah represents the remnant church, hidden in many ways, who when observed by the majority of the prosperous church looks barren and needy. Even though the majority of the church is ignoring her, the Lord loves her dearly and the Holy Spirit has placed in her heart a yearning for something special. She longs to birth a son whom she can dedicate to the Lord for His purposes in this major time of transition. She wants this so much she is willing to travail, fast, and pray for her Samuel to be born. She represents the role of the remnant church who desires transition so that God's eternal purpose can be fulfilled and is willing to pay the price to see it happen. She represents the portion of the church who is willing to live for the Lord totally. She wants a child but not for herself. She wants one to dedicate to the Lord for His purposes. Whether Hannah knew it or not, she was the instrument used to birth the transition in this time of transition.
- d. Samuel represents the man-child of Revelation 12. The name "Samuel" means "name of God," or "his name is El" (God).¹ In Hannah's vow to dedicate Samuel to the Lord, she refers to Samuel as a man-child,

And she vowed a vow, and said, "O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a *man child*, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head" (1 Sam. 1:11, KJV).
- e. In Samuel we note two characteristics. First, he illustrates one who has taken on the character of God and, second, he depicts the man-child of Revelation 12. Thus, we see that Samuel depicts the coming forth of the mature corporate son, the man-child of Revelation 12, or stated as we did in the previous session, the coming forth of the corporate man in fullness—the primary eternal purpose of the church age.
- f. Two more characters we must mention briefly for our picture to be complete. Saul was Israel's first king. God did not want Israel to have a king. He wanted to be their King. However, because the people

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wanted a king like the surrounding nations, God gave Israel Saul and asked Samuel to anoint him as king (1 Sam. 8:5-9). Externally, Saul was everything Israel could have hoped for. He was tall, strong, and handsome. For our picture, because Israel would be a theocracy, Saul represents a governmental-religious-economic order. Realizing Saul is a type for a variety of truths, in our illustration he represents the antichrist system that is self-seeking, not obedient to the voice from the throne and the system which initially and externally is what the people initially think they want. Then there is David. He is the king after God's heart who Samuel ultimately anoints as king. As we know, David depicts Christ as the ultimate and eternal King on the throne.

3. Let's now apply these characters to our day as they illustrate with great clarity where the church is now and the need for the Hannahs and Samuels of the world to arise.
 - a. Today, we see two churches in the land. The vast majority of the church is like Peninnah, abundant, self-focused and compromising with the corrupt culture even if in innocence. On the other hand, there is a remnant church, illustrated by Hannah, although small in comparison, barren in many ways but is yearning for the mature corporate son to emerge in the end times.
 - b. In my illustration, Eli represents the leadership of much of the church. The church is not evil as Eli was not personally participating in the deeds of darkness. However, he was looking the other way as immorality, drunkenness, self-seeking attitudes and actions, and compromise infiltrated the church. The Eli priesthood represents the approach that much of church leadership is pursuing in our day. And just like in the days of Eli, the glory has departed from it. Just like under Eli's leadership, the voice from the throne is silent and the government coming from the religious system is allowing people to do as they desire. Church leaders for the most part are not confronting sin in the church and not executing God's plan based on His voice from the throne. The priesthood, although not anti-Christ, is ignoring God's voice and seeking everything but the Person of Christ. Within the religious system, true church government is non-existent.
 - c. On the other hand, the remnant church is picking up the burden from the throne understanding that we are in desperate times and there is a great need for a man-child to be birthed who will reinstitute the voice from the throne, re-establish a priesthood who will seek the Man, Christ Jesus, and become a vessel for the true government of the Lordship of Christ to return to the church.
 - d. In the midst of these days, the Lord is saying to all who will listen that the old order of church represented by Eli will soon fall away from the pressures, judgments, and persecution that are coming to the global church. The glory has already departed for the most part, but far worse is coming. With a heart of deep compassion, the Holy Spirit is calling the church to abandon the self-seeking, comfortable, lukewarm Christian lifestyle and long for, even travail for a new wineskin of church—one that will birth and mature a corporate man-child.
 - e. In our day, many non-Christians want a king like Saul. They want a man who will solve all their problems, provide for their every need and bring peace to the world. Even many in the self-seeking church want it too. However, like Israel, they will not like what they get. In our day, it is crucial that God have a Samuel in the earth. Just like Samuel ended Saul's reign as king and replaced him with King David, the man-child of Revelation 12, the mature church, the corporate man—the church that has been built on God's eternal purpose with a people who have grown to full maturity--will be

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empowered by the Christ within and as such used to confront the antichrist system and to partner with God to bring about the transition into the age to come.

- f. Therefore, it is imperative that God have a different type of church now—a church that facilitates a totally different type of spiritual environment than what is currently coming from the majority of the church. There is a tremendous need for a church to prepare the corporate man for the end of the age and to equip God’s people to participate with Him in the days ahead and for eternity as well.

II. A Fundamentally Different Environment

1. To set the stage for creating a different environment, let’s next review a few ideas that were previously discussed about God’s eternal purpose for the church age.

- a. First, let’s make sure we understand the purpose of creating a different spiritual environment. An eternal purpose church must create the spiritual environment in their church program, in their teaching and preaching, in their prayer ministries, and *in all they do* to facilitate the coming forth of the corporate man who will become Christ’s representative throughout the remainder of the church age, in the uniqueness of the end times, and throughout the never ending ages to come. In the last session, we stated that the purpose of the church age is to prepare the corporate man who will be made ready as God’s eternal partner for the end of this age and for the eternal ages to come. As such, the corporate man will be the equally yoked bride for the Son and a many membered family of mature sons for the heavenly Father. Thus, the major initiative of the church age is to prepare a bride for Jesus and a family of overcoming sons for the heavenly Father.
- b. Second, we also stated in the last session that the corporate man is to be a representation in fullness of the image of the eternal Son on the throne. In describing what this representation is to look like we drew from the nature of Christ as depicted from within the circle of the throne explaining that man is to take on the character of Christ in fullness by being conformed to the image of the eternal Man on the throne, that is, to become fully like Christ.
- c. Third, we also stated that the corporate man was to function as a priest unto the Lord. As a priest, individuals comprising the corporate man are to develop an intimate relationship with the Lord drawing near to Him through worship, study of and meditation on the Word, fellowship, and abiding with Him continuously. Out of this type of relationship, God’s people are to receive His thought, purpose and plans, burden, and direction and take that to the people as an expression of God’s will. The corporate man is to bring the true voice from the throne to the people.
- d. Fourth, as we approach the end of the age, the corporate man is to become a vessel, or a body, for the Lord as the Head of the Body, to exercise the authority of heaven into the earth. Through golden altar intercession and spiritual warfare, the corporate man will exercise the authority of Christ in the earth.
- e. Fifth, the corporate man is to be prepared so as to come totally under the government of the Head, Christ. The corporate man is to become God’s own possession in fullness so that every aspect of His life has been taken under the submission of Christ as Lord. As this occurs along with the intimacy that accompanies it, the corporate man will grow into one in full union with the Godhead. As this occurs,

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the corporate man will be empowered to exercise God's government at the end of the age and throughout the eternal ages to come.

- f. Sixth, the corporate man is to heed the summons to the golden altar and to pray in total agreement with the eternal high priest who ever lives to make intercession. Connecting prayer with heavenly will, thought, and purpose the corporate man will partner with Christ praying eternal purpose prayers from a heavenly perspective.
- g. Finally, the corporate man is to be a vessel for the voice from the throne to be proclaimed in the earth. There are many voices coming from the church currently but few represent the true voice from the throne. The corporate man will be the vessel through which Christ can speak to His church and to the world.
- h. As you surely noticed, what we have just highlighted is fundamentally different than what almost everyone, including myself, who reads this is doing. Even so, we can change and prepare God's people for God's eternal purpose for this age and for the eternal ages. However, to do so will require us to create in our churches a fundamentally different environment, one which builds into the hearts and lives of the people we lead the principles and precepts of what comprises an eternal purpose church.

2. The corporate man will only arise with a focused effort to make it happen.

- a. As pastors and leaders and those wanting to become the corporate man, we must create an entirely different environment in the churches we lead. We must become the Hannah of our day to labor in intercession and ministry to build a different type of church.
- b. To do this we must allow the Holy Spirit to crush our old spiritual environment and approach. Much like the Eli system had to be ended for the Samuel ministry to arise, we must allow our old wineskin to be crushed and in its place build a church based on a completely different purpose—God's eternal purpose.
- c. We cannot patch a new truth onto an old structure. Like Jesus spoke, "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old" (Luke 5:36). We cannot just patch God's eternal purpose onto our current way of doing church. It will not work. It will take a fundamentally different environment to build a church that facilitates God's eternal purpose. I cannot over emphasize how different the church environment for an eternal purpose church must be. I chose "fundamentally" as the adjective to describe the magnitude of the difference. Fundamental suggests the essential foundation upon which something is based. I could just as easily have used the adjective radically, deeply, profoundly, extremely, or overwhelmingly. The point being that the environment we must build is not just a little different in which we just patch a new truth onto our existing structure. No, we must build a profoundly different church structure to facilitate God's eternal purpose to emerge in our churches. For virtually every one of us, we must allow God to crush the old wineskin of our church structure. We must allow the Holy Spirit to strip off our old garment completely and in its place rebuild something entirely new.

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3. To be used of God in such a radical transformation, we will almost certainly be required to come out of the religious system of our day in order to build an eternal purpose church.
 - a. The book of Hebrews states this, “So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come” (Heb. 13:13-14). In essence, the author of Hebrews is saying to his Jewish audience that to experience Christ and to come along on the journey with Him to the eternal city, individuals would have to leave forever the religious system of the past. What was acceptable for them in days gone by was no longer acceptable. They had to leave the old to come into the new.
 - b. This call to leave the system to come into God’s more perfect way was a common occurrence for many of God’s chosen instruments. John the Baptist had to go into the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. Elijah had to declare judgment and then go to brook Cherith to be fed by ravens. The apostle Paul had to leave all he had been taught and fought diligently to preserve. We too must leave the old system to build a church based on God’s eternal purpose. You would not think it to be necessary to do so, but the old, the incorrect, and the pride based systems of man are too entrenched in error and imbalance for most to accept. The result will be that if we want to create an environment for people to be prepared in God’s eternal purpose, we too must come outside the religious system in order to build what God would desire for the church age.
 - c. I want to make this point and make it very clearly. The current structure of the vast majority of the global church will not adequately prepare people for what is soon coming to the earth. Multitudes entangled in the old system will be swept away by the tribulation and persecution coming as the anti-Christ system arises throughout the world. Building an eternal purpose church will be hard in many ways, but it will be worth it. As you will see in the remainder of this session, the environment you will have to create to facilitate a church based on God’s eternal purpose will not fit into the church culture promoted by most leaders in the body of Christ.
 - d. With this background, let’s shift our thinking to specific aspects of areas that must be addressed if we are to build an eternal purpose church. The following lists along with very brief explanation ten areas of focus we must have as leaders if we are to do this, the first being creating an environment to make a bride ready for Jesus.
4. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church for the bride to be made ready.
 - a. As we stated earlier the corporate man made ready in fullness will become the eternal wife for the Son of God who will partner with Him forever as His eternal partner. We developed a class on preparing a bride for Jesus as part of our Lifeschool curriculum releasing it in 2009. Personally, it was and still is my favorite of all the classes. However, I was shocked and disappointed at how little enthusiasm it received when it was introduced in Africa to our Lifeschool students there. Some were excited for sure but many did not really understand the importance of it. I am not criticizing them because I also received the same reaction locally. It is more of a statement about where the church is globally than about our Lifeschool students personally. For the most part, the pastors who are involved in our Lifeschool program have taught the class to their churches as a twelve-week study

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either on Sunday morning or as a mid-week study. Even so, few have incorporated the idea of a bride to be made ready as part of their church's spiritual DNA.

- b. This is the case even though a major aspect of God's eternal purpose for the church age is to prepare a bride who will live in full union with Christ, made ready as an eternal partner for Him who has taken on His nature and character in fullness, and who is totally possessed by Him whereby He has become their life. I know that last sentence is a mouthful, but it is so true. This is quite possibly the most important dimension of the church age—to prepare an equally yoked bride for Jesus who will be His eternal partner forever as in union they abide in great intimacy and advance the kingdom throughout the creation—and do this forever throughout the eternal ages.
- c. From our 20 years of experience of teaching and emphasizing the need for the bride to be made ready at our home church, it is clear to me that the topic of the bride and the need for the bride to be made ready must permeate all we do in our churches. Teaching a series on it will not suffice to make a people ready. There must be in our churches a spiritual environment in which the subject is emphasized regularly no matter what the theme of our teaching may be. Therefore, rather than addressing the idea of the bride as a subject to be taught on, it must become an integral part of who we are and what we do. Only then will we have created an environment for the crucial dimension of God's eternal purpose—the bride made ready as an eternal partner for Jesus.

5. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church for believers to grow in intimacy and union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- a. When one begins to study the bride, one trait becomes evident. The maturing bride will grow in intimacy with the Lord. We observe the idea of bridal intimacy in the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), in the Song of Songs, the gospel of John, and the book of Revelation. The idea of intimacy with Christ being an essential and necessary ingredient to the bride being made ready is interspersed throughout the scriptures and readily apparent throughout the teachings about the bride.
- b. However, in much of the church intimacy is not emphasized nearly as much as other issues. At times, I look at Facebook ads for upcoming conferences. You see regularly topics like breakthrough, glory, healing, prophetic ministry, or what is God saying prophetically to the church. You rarely see a conference on intimacy with Christ, greater love for Him, etc. Most definitely there are exceptions and there are wonderful ministries who pursue intimacy with Christ. Nonetheless, many do not. Many are focused on the external or stated another way on the things of God.
- c. Intimacy with the Lord is an absolutely necessary ingredient to being made ready as a bride for Jesus and for all God desires for us in His eternal thought and plans. One of His reasons for creating man was to have a family in relationship with Him. He desires a deep love relationship that involves a people seeking Him for Himself not for His provision. He longs for a people who will wait on Him, partake of Him and his Word, and fellowship with Him. He desires a love relationship with His creation. We have stated in prior sessions that God's eternal purpose involves a people in full union with God, possessed by Him with Christ becoming their life. This will only occur in a people who are intimate with their God.

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d. Therefore, if we are to create a church based on God's eternal purpose, we must emphasize to our church intimacy with the Godhead. We must not just teach an occasional message on intimacy. Intimacy must become a major theme of our church mission and message, and the call to intimacy must permeate everything we do and teach. We must include in our spiritual environment the need for intimacy, how to develop an intimate relationship with the Lord, and how important developing now an intimate relationship with the Lord is for the sake of our eternal relationship with the Lord.

6. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church for overcoming sons to be prepared for the heavenly Father.

a. Most of the church currently is focused on the things of God or making people feel comfortable in their sin, self and weakness. Much of the church is attempting to get believers healthy, wealthy, and successful in their worldly pursuits. Instead, we must change our message, mission, and vision dramatically to make our call to raise up the corporate man, or stated differently the bride, overcoming sons, or the man-child.

b. In a manner similar to the bride being prepared to become the eternal wife of the Lamb, believers are to overcome their flesh, the world, and the devil so as to mature as a son for the heavenly Father. This too is a major part of God's eternal purpose for the church age. Just as individual believers are to become an equally yoked bride for the Son, these same believers are to become mature sons for the Father. This is also a major dimension of God's eternal purpose for the age.

c. As sons mature and the bride emerges in fullness (the same people), the corporate man—the man-child—will have been birthed and matured, and the age can then transition into the age to come. Therefore, the objective of the corporate overcoming son and the prepared bride must become central to our church's vision, message, prayer focus, and total program if we are to build a church based on God's eternal purpose. The idea of the maturing church being progressively filled unto the fullness of Christ as Ephesians and other writings so clearly state cannot be secondary in our church mission, our preaching, our teaching, our conversations and speech. Just like we stated about the bride being made ready, the subject of the corporate son for the Father must be totally integrated into our church's spiritual environment. We must make it a foundational principle of our ministry.

7. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church for believers to take on the nature and character of Christ in fullness.

a. Most of the church right now operates as a blessing ministry. Whether we state it directly or not, we imply that the purpose of being a Christian is so that God can bless you. We suggest that God is always in a good mood, that He never brings judgment, and that He does not want us to suffer in any way. Our services declare breakthrough, healing, deliverance, prosperity, and provision and a multitude of other ideas that promote that God only wants to bless you.

b. I want to be blessed as much as the next person and as I think back to my early days as a believer, I thought of God as being there only to bless me and treated Him more like Santa Claus than the God who rules the universe. Yet, as I look back over my life, I know that God has richly blessed me far beyond what I deserve and in every area of my life. So, I am not disputing that God is a God of blessing. Nevertheless, God does not want our ministries and churches to be focused solely or even primarily as a blessing ministry—they are to become building ministries.

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- c. The mature sons for the Father and the prepared bride for the Son—in other words, the corporate man—will be a people who have been *transformed into the image of Christ in fullness* so as to be prepared to be an exact representation of Christ in the earth. People prepared in such a way will be used in the last days of the church age in powerful ways, will facilitate the casting down of the dragon as recorded in Revelation 12, and will be used as Christ's representative forever. Whereas those who get breakthrough, healed, delivered, a wife they want or a financial blessing but do not mature will be saved but spend eternity in the outer court of heaven.
- d. As Ephesians 4 reminds us, our role as leaders is to build up a people, to equip a people for the work of ministry, to lead people to maturity—until they reach the full stature of Christ! This is the role of the fivefold ministry in an eternal purpose church. Yes, God does bless and will bless but our church mission is not to bless, but to build or fill a people into the image of Christ in fullness. Therefore, our mission must be centered and focused around conforming a people into the image of Christ in fullness.

8. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church for believers to intercede before the heavenly golden altar.

- a. Much of our prayer, in fact, I would say the vast majority of the church's prayer both individually and corporately is focused upon self, individual needs, and selfish desires. People are believing and praying for cars, houses, wealth, health, and family issues. None of that is necessarily wrong as long as they fit into God's will for a believer's life. Although Jesus did say that all the things the Gentiles eagerly seek, our Father knows we need them too and in this context told us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you (Matt. 6:32-33).
- b. However, this is not the type of prayer on which the eternal purpose church must be focused. The eternal purpose church has been summoned to the heavenly golden altar to partner in unity with our great High Priest, Christ, who is ever living to make intercession for His creation. Christ is interceding at the heavenly golden altar but not on earthly ground. He ever lives to make intercession for God's eternal purposes from a heavenly perspective.
- c. The Lord's prayer includes this phrase, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). God's will in heaven IS His eternal purpose. Yes, it is okay to pray for healing if one is sick and for a family member in rebellion or a multitude of other issues. However, the focus of our intercession must be to pray in agreement with Christ's intercession in heaven asking that His eternal purposes which are being accomplished in heaven be fulfilled on earth.
- d. We will have a session later in this class on this topic and another entire class on it also. So, don't try to understand it completely at this point. Just be aware that for most leaders, our entire prayer ministry must change from a needs-based prayer ministry to a purpose based one.

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9. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church for believers to stand strong and to partner with God in the uniqueness of the end times.
- The end times will be unique in all of history. Devastation will be widespread, redemptive judgments will occur like birth pangs, and Christians and Jews will be persecuted globally. In the midst of these massive events, Jesus said that he who endures to the end will be saved (Matt. 24:13). These are frightful words for all of us since we quite possibly will be alive in those days. In the midst of these end-time events, the scriptures say that many will fall away (1 Tim. 4:1).
 - While intense pressure is being put on the faithful and many are falling away, God desires His remnant, His bride, His overcoming sons, His man-child to be strong and partner with Him as the Lord confronts through His Body the anti-Christ and the false religious system.
 - In other words, God desires His end-time church to be strong for the purpose of being used in power and authority in the difficult days which are upon us. Even so, the current message of the majority of the global church is creating a false mentality. Dominion theology or post millennialism is creating a revival mentality. The idea that Christ will not return until the earth is Christianized leads the church to primarily call for revival. Whereas we all want to see God move in power and for the harvest to come, the premise of calling for revival will not prepare a people for what is really coming in the end times—judgment, persecution, and a major confrontation with the global anti-Christ system. The idea of preterism or the pre-tribulation rapture along with the message of God only wanting to bless is creating an escapism mentality. The ideas that because God is good He will get us out of here before things get too bad is creating a church which is not being prepared to stand, much less to be used in the end times.
 - Therefore, as those building an eternal purpose church, we must create an environment that prepares people for what is soon coming to the earth. We must first make sure they know there will be no pre-tribulation rapture and that the church will go through many tribulations, persecution and opposition. Even more than that though, we must also fill the incense bowls with golden altar intercession, be faithful witnesses of truth, and empower the people we lead to be used in the end-time harvest. To accomplish these things, we must create a dramatically different environment than currently exists in most churches.
10. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church to give believers an accurate vision of the judgment seat of Christ, eternal rewards, and eternity.
- If you will notice in the above heading I used the word “accurate” to describe the vision for the judgment seat of Christ and eternity. Most Christians know that every believer must stand before Christ and give an account of their life. They know they will be rewarded or not rewarded based on how they lived their life. Believers also are keenly aware of heaven and eternal life and the hope that it offers to us all.
 - What people do not adequately understand is how important it is to prepare for the most important appointment of their life—to stand before the Creator of the Universe and give an account of how

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they lived. It should be a terrifying expectation that causes us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). Most people do not understand the magnitude of difference in how they might spend eternity. I am not speaking about heaven and hell here. Certainly, there is a vast difference for one in hell forever than one in heaven. However, even for believers who will spend eternity with the Lord, there is a vast difference in experience. Some will be in the outer court forever whereas others will be seated with Christ on His throne.

- c. People do not consider that those who have adequately prepared making themselves ready will be used in partnership with Christ as His eternal representative throughout the ages as His kingdom forever expands.
 - d. People do not fully understand how one is adequately prepared for the judgment seat of Christ. Many think it is doing more--more works, more study of the Word, more service, more, more, more. It is not this at all. Serving God fully is important, but the way we will be judged is not by works as much as by the measure of Christ in us. How much have we died to sin and self and how much has Christ filled us as we become conformed to His death.
 - e. Years ago in the church I pastored, I had a conversation with a man about heaven, the judgment seat, and eternity. I was making my point that we must radically pursue being ready for that day. His response was that he was content to be in the outer reaches of heaven and not concerned about eternal rewards. I expressed to no avail how foolish an attitude that was. Unfortunately, it is more common than we would think. For years, the Lord has put in my heart the idea that anyone who does not consider that they will one day stand before the judgment seat and prepare for that frightful day is like Esau trading his inheritance for a pot of stew (Gen. 25:27-34).
 - f. Some people are like Esau and do not care. However, there are many who if they had a fresh revelation of God's eternal purposes for the ages and that there will be an eternal determination of whether they qualify for this or not at the judgment seat of Christ, they would make a radical change in the way they live. They would do everything they could do to be prepared for that day.
 - g. Therefore, as pastors and leaders we must create a spiritual environment that communicates on a regular basis the need to get ready for the judgment seat of Christ. Like all of these topics, it is not enough to just teach a series on the judgment seat and move on. This idea must permeate our message.
11. For the corporate man to come forth, we must create a spiritual environment in our church for a mighty army to arise.
- a. Many leaders have created a spiritual environment in which believers are to come to church and receive and that is their primary responsibility. They are often asked to invite others to attend to receive also. This is one of the characteristics of a blessing focused church. Come and be blessed. Come and hear a message that gets you out of depression or to make it through to the next week. Come and receive healing or deliverance. Come and receive a prophetic word that tells you how good you are. Most likely without realizing it, the church has created a "man of God" approach to church. Come to the "man of God" and receive.

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- b. If ministered in balance, these things are good and needed. Personally, I have received great blessings from the Lord in services in which encouraging messages, healing, deliverance, and prophetic ministry was the focus. Even so, this is not the primary purpose of the church age. It is to prepare a corporate man who has been conformed into the image of Christ and lives by His pattern. This corporate man is to function as a mighty army representing Christ—now, in the end times, and forever. This army will be the body of Christ in the earth. They will take on the nature and character of Christ so as to be His representatives. They will carry the message of God’s eternal purpose. They will intercede with authority at the golden altar offering eternal purpose intercession. They will minister in power.
- c. If a church is to be built on God’s eternal purpose, one primary shift is to change from a man of God focused blessing ministry to an equipping ministry focused on preparing an army. Paul challenged fivefold leaders in Ephesians to equip the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13). In other words to build an army.

12. For the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church in which leaders and believers are prepared as faithful witnesses of truth in a culture of great moral compromise.

- a. The world is rapidly spiraling away from God and the truths of His word, and the church is in tremendous compromise. We live in a progressively immoral, self-seeking, and anti-Christian culture which is deteriorating and becoming more and more opposed to the standard of biblical truth. Even many Christians are compromising with the culture. In an attempt to be relevant to a post Christian world, much of the church has drifted far from the uncompromising Word of God as its standard for life and godliness. Many in our pulpits are putting their stamp of approval on extreme compromise or, if not outright approving, turning away to ignore it. The message of the vast majority of the church is not sufficient to combat the immoral, anti-Christian culture and the compromise that now characterizes the global church.
- b. There is a tremendous need for a church which upholds a standard of righteousness based on the uncompromised word of God and from that standard be a faithful witness of truth to a post Christian society and a church in great compromise. The eternal purpose church must call people to holiness while at the same time exhibiting real love. The eternal purpose church is to be a faithful witness to confront sin in the lives of the people, the extremes of legalism in the life of the church, and the rampant lawlessness that permeates much of the church. The eternal purpose church which is to be focused on raising up the corporate man is to be a faithful witness of truth to expose lies and deception that lead the bondservants astray
- c. In summary, as a faithful witness especially as we approach the end of the age, the church must hold fast to the message of Jesus Christ as the way, truth, and life as the only way to salvation and to the absolute truth of the Word of God as the way to life and godliness. Therefore, a different spiritual environment must be created in our churches. The corporate man of the church age must hold to the message of Christ and not condone or ignore sin, false religious movements, or lawlessness.

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13. Finally, for the corporate man to arise, we must create a spiritual environment in our church in which Christ and Him crucified is proclaimed.
- a. The apostle Paul's predominant message was Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). He proclaimed this foundational message wherever he went. His focus was not just on what Christ did for us through His crucifixion. Moreover, he proclaimed *the cross life* for the believer also. He regularly proclaimed the idea that we are to die to sin and self so that Christ may live in us in fullness (Gal. 2:20).
 - b. He wrote this to the Philippian church, "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). This is certainly true today. Much of the church in the west views the cross of Christ as an enemy. Drawing from the tenets of hyper-grace or the prosperity gospel, much of the church has forgotten Paul's primary message and the message that prepares a people to be made ready as a bride and as a son to experience God's eternal purpose. If we simply read through any of Paul's or the other apostles writings or any of the messages of the book of Acts, we quickly see that Christ and Him crucified with all of its ramifications is the predominant message of the New Testament. It will also be the foundational message to be proclaimed in the coming end-time harvest.
 - c. If we are to prepare a people for God's eternal purpose so that the eternal Man Christ lives through them in fullness, we must prepare them to take up their cross and follow Christ and to live by the message spoken and written by Paul of Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." We will have a full session on this idea later, but realize for now that two traits will characterize the prepared believer—intimacy and image. And image is the result of dying to sin and self so that Christ fills the believer unto fullness and Christ lives in and through them in fullness.
 - d. To summarize this session, if we are to build a church utilizing God's eternal purpose as our blueprint, we must radically change our paradigm laying down much of our old wineskin and building something totally new and different. It will not be sufficient to merely patch on a little eternal purpose here and there. For most of us, we must totally abandon our old way of doing church and begin to create a completely different spiritual environment. As we do this radical work, we will be well on our way of our journey toward building an eternal purpose church.

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