

2016-02-13

Prophetic/judgment #1

Hi all,

In last month's e-newsletter I briefly shared something the Lord gave me for the body of Christ, and now I'd like to go into more detail, and also share what Peter meant when he said*, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God", because they are connected. *1 Peter 4:17

First, my understanding and what I was thinking

Context is everything, so I need to share both my understanding of the early church and what I had been thinking at the time when He broke in and told me what the Spirit is saying to the body of Christ - so here is a brief overview of my understanding and what I was thinking about:

When we read Acts 2 through chapter 7 we wonder at the outpouring of those days. Some 3,000 people heard Peter's explanation of them speaking with languages they had never learned; this was the outpouring marking the start of the last days as told by Joel.* They were a close-knit group, the body of Christ all contained in Jerusalem, all Jewish, and at this point faith in Jesus was considered just another aspect of Judaism. *Acts 2:17/Joel 2:28-32

Even back then the Jewish faith was multi-faceted, ranging from the Essenes who strictly kept the law and were all about the end times and Messiah, to the holiness-movement Pharisees with their own laws they exalted above the Word, to the liberal Sadducees who didn't believe in angels and spirits, to the political Herodians. At first, so what's another sect of Judaism; believing this man Jesus was Messiah?

The first year and a half

Over the next 18 months they met in homes, going from house to house and praying, eating together, and learning from the apostles about this faith, and they were so giving and united there were no needs among them. Scripture doesn't say directly, but implies Peter's shadow* falling on a sick person healed them. *5:15

But their numbers continued to increase, with modern estimates of 10,000 believers - and the authorities had to act. In Acts 7 they arrested and put on trial Steven, one of the leaders, with the whole church given to his trial and execution. Chapter 7 closes with the statement that the executioners laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul, from Tarsus.

Acts 8 opens with these words: "And Saul approved of them killing him. And on that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." Let that sink in. 10,000 believers in Jerusalem and everyone but the apostles moved out of town immediately to neighboring Samaria and Judea because of the persecution inside the city.

The time from the giving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, to Acts 8:1 when they all left town, was no more than 18 months to 2 years. Acts 8:1 says all the believers moved to Judea and Samaria, where chapter 8 picks up the fact Philip went to Samaria and preached Jesus, and so many people were healed and delivered the whole city had 'great joy'. And whereas Philip was strictly an evangelist*, the apostles Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands on the new believers that they would receive the Holy Spirit. *Acts 21:8

Enter Saul of Tarsus - the future Paul, the sent one

Acts 9 is the telling of Jesus appearing* to Saul of Tarsus as Saul had decided to expand his persecution of the believers to Damascus, Syria, and how after his conversion Barnabas introduces him to the apostles**. *9:17, 26:16; **9:26-27

Acts 10 is informational about the Roman, Cornelius, seeing an angel who tells him to look for Peter, who will tell him what he must do*. When Peter arrives and is telling them about Jesus, just at the point of His resurrection, which one must believe in order to be saved, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon them for they all start talking in unlearned languages, to the astonishment of the Jewish men accompanying Peter. Peter would later say**, "God who knew their hearts, gave them the Holy Spirit even as He did us...". **Acts 15:8

(*Angels are not allowed to preach the gospel, which is why the angel had to tell Cornelius to find Peter - for the simple reason Jesus died for people, not angels, so they don't have the privilege of sharing the gospel or using the name of Jesus. That is why Jude 9 says Michael, the greatest of all angels, told Satan, "The

Lord rebuke you". For a person to say 'the Lord rebuke you', however, is an insult to Jesus, for unlike angels, we have been given the name and even commanded to use the name of Jesus against demons.)

Greeks believe - additional information 8:1 didn't tell us

In Acts 11:19-26 we are told that when the disciples left Jerusalem in 8:1 because of Saul's persecution, some actually went beyond Judea and Samaria to Phoenicia on the coast and to the island of Cyprus, and some Cypriots now born again, traveled to Antioch (Syria) and told Greeks about Jesus.

The apostles, upon hearing of Greek believers in Jesus, sent Barnabus to Antioch to check on these Greek believers, which was a brand new issue to consider, as up until now with the exception of Cornelius' household, the church was Jewish and had never reached out to the pagan Greeks.

We are told in 11:23-24 the new believers are relieved upon meeting Barnabus, for he had the good sense to first see what the grace of God had done*, and then responded to God's work by encouraging them all to continue in the Lord. Barnabus also remembered Saul of Tarsus, and how when the Lord appeared to him outside of Damascus, told him he was called to the Gentiles**, so Barnabus left Antioch to find Saul in Tarsus, and returned with him. Verse 26 says they stayed a year to teach these new believers, and we were first called Christians at Antioch. *11:23, **26:17

What I was thinking about

Now you are caught up in my understanding, which led me to think about the changes the now apostle Paul brought to the body of Christ when he began teaching during that year in Antioch. The time between Pentecost in Acts 2 until Paul starts teaching in Acts 11:26, was about 10 years.

Over those 10 years, up until Paul taught in Antioch, there had been no formal teaching of what the faith meant. The first gospel stories of Jesus were being written down and passed around, but no one was teaching the people what it all meant. They knew Jesus, and they could draw from what Jesus said, but no one had taught the specifics of how to apply one's faith to daily life.

Paul had not yet written the Romans about righteousness and the law and being dead to sin. He had not yet written the Corinthians about the gifts of the Spirit and how we are all members of one body of Christ. He had not yet written the Ephesians about the new creation and growing up in Christ and laying aside the old man to walk in the newness of the Spirit. He had not written the Galatians about legalism and how there is nothing but the new creation, all are equal in Christ and they could fulfill the law by walking in love and the Spirit. He had not yet written to the Philippians about how Jesus left heaven to become man and having suffered death for us all, was given the name above all names.

All those letters and all that massive revelation would come from his mouth and pen over the next 20 years - but up to that point no one had those revelations, there is no record of any teacher, until Paul.

The things we take for granted had not yet been taught. Even Peter, in his last letter, in his closing words* before his execution, acknowledged that even then, some of what Paul taught was hard to understand. If Peter said that at the end of his life, can you imagine the newness and strangeness of Paul's teaching at the start? *II Peter 3:15-16

It is no wonder during Paul's 1 year teaching at Antioch that such a difference was made that we disciples in Jesus were first recognized as a separate class of people - we are Christians.

Think about those 10 years of no teachings, just people running around with the Holy Spirit knowing nothing. If you lived through the 1970's Charismatic renewal, you have a taste of what it was like - many who had newly received the Holy Spirit needed to be locked up for awhile because in their great zeal without knowledge, they did more damage than they did good. For next week: What the Lord said about how those 10 years before Paul relate to the last 10 years in our time for the body of Christ, and judgement.

Blessings,
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2016-02-20

Prophetic/judgment #2, The vision

Hi all,

Last week I shared what I was thinking when the Lord 'broke in' to tell me what the Spirit is saying to (many in) the body of Christ for this time. I also said I wanted to share what it means by 'judgment begins at the house of God' because it is directly related to what He said.

Quick summary of last week

In the 10+ years between Pentecost in Acts 2 and Paul starting to teach in Antioch in Acts 11, no one had been teaching the practical aspects of applying life in Christ to daily life beyond the basics. The teaching of Paul was so dramatically different than what anyone had heard since Pentecost it caused the world to take notice that they were a distinct group and called them 'Christians'. Amazing!

Setting the context

In The Revelation chapters 2-3 the Lord gives individual words to the body of Christ in 7 different cities in Asia, which was then merely a state in the nation that would become modern Turkey. He says to each*, "He that has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches." *2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22

Note that is plural. Therefore each word was first meant for the individual church He addressed, then outward to the rest of the body of Christ. Even you and I some 1900 years later have learned from those words!

The Visitation and the vision

Similarly, what the Lord said to me is first for a specific group in the body of Christ, then outward to the larger body of Christ. He was specifically talking about those who over the last 10-15 years have lived their faith similar to how it was in the 10 or so years between Pentecost and Paul's teaching in Antioch; believers, but believers who have had little growth as disciples and as people. Their knowledge was more broad and general than specific to their life and growth as Christians and growth as human beings.

In our day there are many reasons for people having a broad knowledge but little specific application to their faith. At the core isn't a lack of teaching or teachers, but there is still a vast people calling themselves Christian who over the course of years have stepped back from each opportunity to grow, which came masked as hardship and difficulty. Knowledge does not equal growth, only doing the Word equals growth.

With each personality conflict, with each disagreement, with each misunderstanding, with each difficulty in life, these are a people who backed off personal growth in Christ and as human beings, who backed off opportunities to demonstrate love and forgiveness, the fruit of the Spirit and difficult but godly decisions, in exchange for staying stagnant in growth, unchallenged and unmoved.

He said; "Those who in times past were easily distracted, having their ear always to the latest thing, must give up those distractions and turn their attention to me in order to grow. It is time for many to stop following other voices that they might hear my voice." (Those other voices can include but aren't limited to memories of the past, worldly thoughts and ways of doing things, love of the world and things in it, etc.)

Eating garbage

As He was saying this to His left this vision appeared: I saw a woman staring with head moved slightly forward as one does when concentrating intensely while looking at a spectacle, with wide open eyes that were not blinking at all, and open mouth gasping at all she saw - at many TV and computer screens all floating in the air in front of her face in random movement, maybe 8 screens all moving about like they were part of a giant screen saver, and she was trying desperately to take it all in.

Then 1 screen came within arm's reach and she reached into the screen and took out from it rotting garbage - but she thought it was good tasting food and more than that, she thought it was the latest and greatest like a new chef presenting a new dish to the public - she thought she was on the cutting edge of secret knowledge and ate it all without question nor discernment - she crammed it into her mouth, eating every word and image, but not daintily, rather like a starving person crams food and doesn't care that much of it gets on their mouth and face and clothes and falls to the ground - she kept grabbing at and devouring it as each screen moved around and came within arm's reach, slowly at first, then faster and faster like a starving person...and she became a mess, with garbage all over her otherwise white linen gown, all over her face, even in her hair.

In her spirit

As she was doing this my attention shifted to her insides for the simple reason I could suddenly see her spirit and down in what would physically have been in the stomach area, and within her being was a baby that looked like a combination of Jesus and her. I've never seen anything like it in my 30 years of Jesus visiting me and teaching me and showing me things in the Spirit. The little baby in her was her, but also Jesus, and words just can't describe it accurately enough. It was like she had His traits and He had hers and they were one, except that He was trying to grow in her but she wouldn't eat the right food that would allow growth. It wasn't a case of malnourishment so much, but rather stunted grow - she should have been an adult by now but wasn't able to grow due to the diet she consumed.

In the same way an apple seed is larger inside than it is on the outside, in that within it is untold numbers of apple trees and apples, so too I instantly knew that all the answers she was looking for 'out there' were in Christ who was in her, and trying desperately to grow her from baby-hood to adulthood. But she thought that dull and uninteresting. He said "Part of her test of growth is this; Is she willing to have questions remain unanswered, putting them in my care and trusting me for her well-being, or will she continue to ignore my silence on these questions, which are inconsequential though she thinks them important, pressing on in them while ignoring areas I'm asking her to deal with?"

"There are areas of her heart I long to touch, and areas in her life she needs to face, but each area would require her to look honestly at her heart and life which would then result in facing serious issues. And she knows these things. On that day, do you think I'll ask her about what she thinks she knows on so many subjects, or will I ask her about the issues in her heart and her life where she denied me access?"

He continued; "Many who have lived distracted lives such as this have an open door to fear and the enemy's lies, for they ignore discernment in favor of gathering as much information as possible from the many voices they are straining to hear. In times past many have picked and chosen the areas in which they want to grow in me as it suited them. Many have failed in past years at opportunities they've had for growth, in favor of adding knowledge and keeping themselves busy, ignoring true growth in Me. Being focused on my voice is the first step towards growth in strength and character in me, but many won't even press in to get to know me and my voice because the other voices are so immediate. Thus, they remain babes in me when they should be mature adults in me."

About 'Judgment begins at the house of God'

Peter said in I Peter 4:17: "For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God." What did he mean by that? Context is everything, so let me set the context with the start of that chapter:

Peter's first letter is focused on suffering - in fact that word is used 15 or 16 times in I Peter. He teaches about suffering two ways: Persecution is the primary theme of I Peter, but also causing our flesh to suffer because we won't allow it to go on sinning. He starts chapter 4 saying this:

"Therefore since Christ suffered for us in his flesh, arm yourselves with this same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin..." He goes on to speak of how in a past life we were sinners, but now the people we used to run with think it strange we no longer go with them to sin. (v3-4)

In the rest of his letter, he uses suffering to talk of persecution - 'suffering in the Lord' or 'for the Lord' never is about sickness or illness or some person bothering you - it is always either suffering in your flesh because you won't let yourself sin anymore, or persecution. In context, persecution of Christians is a sign of judgment coming on the world, but first to the body of Christ.

Next week I'll share in more detail what 'judgment begins at the house of God' means, the rest of the vision, and comments He made about this year and next. Until then, blessings,

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2016-02-27

Prophetic/judgment #3

Hi all,

I've been talking about a visitation and vision I had about the body of Christ and will close it out today.

This is a wake up call to the church asleep

For much of the body of Christ around the world, believing in Jesus is a life and death situation. Many in those regions have more zeal for Him than many in the 'free' parts of the world, yet lack solid teaching on most aspects of the faith. One Chinese house church leader said they estimate 1,000,000 Chinese come to the Lord every month, but they have little teaching on marriage and family, for instance. India is not far behind in terms of numbers, and similarly the Lord has said the momentum has shifted in India to Indians evangelizing rather than relying on foreign missionaries to spread the gospel.

I have to shake my head in sadness when I hear of leaders in the auditorium church prophesying that the 'revival' they are looking for will happen when (one prophecy said when the Carolina Panthers win the Super Bowl)...folks, it's already happening, but it isn't coming to an auditorium near you - it is happening family to family as that is what God Himself invented back in the Garden of Eden, and He has never left the home.

But what does judgment starting at the house of God look like?

When you believed on Jesus, you judged yourself. You said 'I'm a sinner and I need God's remedy'. You judged yourself and took the provision of Christ. That 'big' judging of yourself set the stage for a lifetime of judging yourself.

When we do wrong and feel that grievance of the Spirit of Truth inside, and respond by admitting "I missed it Lord", we are judging ourselves. When we realize we said something hurtful to someone and go to them to apologize, we are judging ourselves. When God is dealing with us about a sin, a matter of the heart, of disciplining our thoughts or or physically - and we respond appropriately, we are judging ourselves.

When we stop running to and fro like children, to this newest flashy spiritual thing or that, in order to focus internally on Christ in us and growth in Him - we are judging ourselves.

When we realize our faith is stagnant because we are so locked into a narrow set of what we believe, and humble ourselves to truly learn beyond that which we think we know so well - we are judging ourselves.

When we have not been in fellowship with other believers for a long time and God is dealing with us about that, maybe because no church satisfies, but realizing it is people and real relationships we are looking for - we are judging ourselves. That resetting of godly priorities and then acting on them, is judging ourselves.

When the clerk gives us change from a transaction that is an error in our favor, and rather than keeping the extra money we return it - we are judging ourselves. When a server at a restaurant accidentally leaves off of the bill some food we had ordered, reducing the bill in our favor, and we call their attention to that rather than paying the lesser amount - we are judging ourselves. When we borrow or rent something and return it in as good or better condition than when we received it, we are judging yourself and walking in love.

In whatever area God is dealing with us about, if we respond appropriately, we are judging ourselves. Thankfully He is patient, often waiting decades for us to deal with issues of the heart and character.

For the west in particular

When I asked about the US and Europe in particular He responded with something He has said to me twice before - and He offered no more insight than before. Evidently because He keeps directing me back to what He said before, I need to learn more or nothing has changed since the first time He said it:

"Study the history of persecution. Notice there is nearly always economic and political pressure. Those pressures cause my people to judge themselves to focus on what is truly important. Remember what I told you years ago when you asked about Ananias and Sapphira; 'Many in this nation cry to the Father for revival, but if the Father poured out what they asked, there would be many, many, Ananias and Sapphira's across this land, for the level of judgment is equal to the level of the anointing.'"

(The intense light of God's Presence causes darkness to vanish. If you are all light in your heart and life you can stand the intensity of the light. But if the heart and life is darkness as with A&S, it would be very bad)

I have shared what He taught me about Ananias and Sapphira in other writings and teachings so I won't go into detail here other than to say that above, and this - their sin was hypocrisy during a time of great unity

and outpouring of the Father's Spirit, and that unity had to be protected (at that time when all the body of Christ was in Jerusalem right after Pentecost).

Lest you think that odd that He is protective of the unity and love in a body, think of it like this - if you have small children in the house you protect their innocence by keeping out talk of adult subjects - you judge what is being said and who you let into your children's lives in order to protect their innocence. Same thing. That is one reason He stopped Saul of Tarsus when He did - right before Saul expanded his persecution outward to other nations, as Saul was outside Damascus. He was protecting the body by not allowing the persecution to yet expand, asking Saul, 'Why are you persecuting me?', taking it personally.

Persecution

"Don't think it strange concerning the fiery trial that has come upon you, to test you, as though this is something new and strange. But rejoice in that you are now partakers of Christ's suffering, that when His glory is revealed you will also be glad with exceeding joy. Now if any are persecuted for the name of Christ, happy are you...but not let it be because you are a murderer or thief, or evil doers or a busy body involving yourselves in other's matters."

"Yet if any suffer just because you are a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God. For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God; if it begins with us, what will be the outcome of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" I Peter 4:12-17

In the time of Peter writing this the Romans had not yet started State mandated persecution of Christians though there were pockets of persecution (even to death) around the Empire. Most of it was cultural persecution in the form of slander and harmful talk* and lying rumors about Christians. As Christianity spread to all levels of society, so too did society's opinions start to turn against them. The summary of I Peter is that Peter advised obeying the authorities and living upright and honest lives as a means of avoiding persecution. That is the context of judgment begins at the house of God - judge yourself by living upright, godly, and lawful lives. *I Peter 2:11-15, 3:13-18, 4:12-19

When Rome burned starting July 19, the year 64, Nero turned the Empire against Christians, blaming them and taking slander and propaganda about them to a whole new level. They said Christian 'love feasts' were orgies, that Christians were cannibals because they ate the flesh and drank the blood of Jesus, among other lies. They were called hateful and dishonest and were often shunned.

As Rome suffered economically, the blame fell on Christians. That is what we will see increasing in the west. The Lord reminded me of things the Father had said to me, tying them together, and I'll list a few here: "The collapse will come when conservatives are in charge." "Conservatives, Christians and Jews will be blamed for economic and other problems..." and as I was reflecting in 2015 on His statement in 2005 that in 10 years I wouldn't recognize the country, in 2015 He said, "I say to you again, you won't recognize it again in 5 years."

In the US we will see cultural persecution at a new level in the next couple of years. Focus on living right, and investing in relationships with those on the same spiritual page - and if you can't find anyone on your page, turn the page of your heart and get with it. Like He told me during my February 4, 2001: "As it was in the beginning so it must be now; I'm moving in relationships."

There is so much more, but for today; If we judge ourselves and focus on what is real and those relationships in Christ now, it will be much easier for us in the next few years to come. The ones who will be hurt are those who love the world while thinking they are people of faith: Those who equated wealth with godliness, knowledge with maturity, and appearances as something real and solid.

THIS is what the Lord talked to me about, that the last 10 years or so He has allowed many in the body of Christ to act like children running to and fro chasing various teachings and the latest and greatest, but now is the time to grow up. He is being proactive with us by asking us to judge ourselves, in the hopes of sparing many unnecessary difficulty in years to come. Now is the time to focus, to grow, to get to the core of what you believe. Pursue Him and center on your core, for difficult times are ahead for the world. Whew, new subject next week...aren't you glad? lol

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