

Reasons for Hope in Trying Times

Reading Jonathan Cahn's cover story in this issue or his new book, *Return of the Gods*, is a sobering reminder of what is happening in our world. It seems things are rushing headlong toward the end of time. Recently I reread the book of Matthew, and his description of what will happen in the last days is pretty terrifying.

One of my favorite Bible verses is "We know that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). How can that happen when everything is seemingly so bad? We seem to forget that *after* the Battle of Armageddon and the Antichrist, we rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 years of peace.

A more practical way to look at what's happening is to understand that things must get bad before people become desperate for God. My longtime friend Mario Murillo told me in a recent *Strang Report* podcast that he has not seen more openness to the gospel since the Jesus movement of the late '60s and early '70s! Tony Suarez told me his recent four-night crusade in Los Angeles had over 1,300 people testify to being baptized in the Holy Spirit. That reminds me of the early days of the charismatic movement!

Sadly, some charismatic pastors and churches are becoming "sophisticated" and playing down the power of the Holy Spirit. You can go to some charismatic churches where you see none of the gifts in evidence. It is likely that many of the members of those churches have never even received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Some evangelical churches (which ought to know better) are "going woke." This goes beyond being seeker sensitive to reach

people; it involves adopting beliefs of the Left such as critical race theory or the gay agenda.

Murillo told me he used to preach against those churches as heretical, but now he doesn't bother. Instead he encourages the thousands of godly pastors who are standing strong. He tells pastors to advertise they will preach a clear message of salvation and the cost of following Jesus. In other words, if Christians provide a clear alternative to the wackiness of the culture, people will respond. As Jesus said, the fields are white unto harvest.

Then, as if to confirm this, Jordan Peterson, the popular psychologist and author, posted a 10-minute video on YouTube called *Message to the Christian Churches* that garnered over 1 million views in the first week. He talked about how the culture has become so messed up that men—especially young white males—barely know how to respond. The culture tells them they are guilty of patrimony or sexism or toxic masculinity, and they must feel guilty (which Peterson says harkens back to the biblical concept of original sin) about even being male.

Peterson called on Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches to welcome young men because Christianity still affirms men and women as God intended. He says to tell these young men it's normal and good for them to live a life in which there is "a woman to find, a garden to walk in, a family to nurture and face the catastrophes of life stalwartly in truth, devoted to love and without fear." I'm thankful Peterson is speaking up; he's obviously touching a nerve.

But why must someone outside the church tell the church to step up and meet the need in these young men's lives? As important as that is, it's not enough. The purpose of the church is to introduce people to Jesus, discipling them in the truth of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.

I want to make the same challenge to those in the

Pentecostal/charismatic wing of the church who may refuse to understand that people really want to know the power of the Holy Spirit, to see miracles and to fulfill their purpose in Christ.

Let's not take our cues from the world of liberal branches of Christianity. Let's realize, as Mario Murillo has pointed out, that people are tired of having no power in this chaotic world. Many are open to receiving Jesus—and I'll add—experiencing the power of Pentecost.

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