

The Power of a Focused Life

I. The Need for Vision and Focus

Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Proverbs 29:18, KJV)

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint (Proverbs 29:18)

II. Components of a Focused Life

A. **Overall life vision** – primary purpose in life

B. **Life goals** – applying my life vision to each specific area of my life.

Long-term goals (over 10 years) and **short-term goals** (3 months–3 years)

1. **Spiritually** (prayer time, fasting days, Bible study, etc.)
2. **Relationally** (family, friends, etc.)
3. **Vocation** (marketplace calling, etc.)
4. **Ministry** (in the church, outside the church, etc.)
5. **Economically** (spending, giving, saving, investing, etc.)
6. **Physically** (exercise, health, diet, etc.)
7. **Rest** (recreation, vacation, play, entertainment, sports, etc.)

C. **Action plan** – for each long and short-term goal in each area of your life.

D. **Schedule** – for each action plan, i.e., focuses us to prioritize. This is where our life vision most easily is derailed and lost.

The Lord says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.” 15 See then that you walk wisely, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:14–17) {eoa}

Mike Bickle is the director of the International House of Prayer Missions Base of Kansas City, an evangelical missions organization based on 24/7 prayer with worship that is engaged in many evangelistic and inner city outreaches along with multiple justice initiatives, planting houses of prayer, and training missionaries. The International House of Prayer has continued in non-stop prayer led by worship teams since September 19, 1999, and is committed to combining 24/7 prayers for justice with 24/7 works of justice. Around 1,500 people (staff members, students, interns) serve full-time on the missions base, investing fifty hours per week in the prayer room, classroom, and ministry outreaches. Mike is also the founder of the International House of Prayer University which includes a full-time Bible school, music school, and media school. Mike is the author of several books including Passion for Jesus, Growing in the Prophetic, The Pleasures of Loving God, After God’s Own Heart, and Prayers to Strengthen Your Inner Man. Mike’s teaching emphasizes growing in passion for Jesus through intimacy with God, doing evangelism and missions work from the place of night and day prayer, and the end times. To read more content like this, visit .

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Where is the Church in the Book of Revelation?

Some teach that the Church will be raptured before the events that begin in Revelation 4:1. This teaching is based on the argument that since the term Church is not used in chapters 4–21 of Revelation, the Church must no longer be on earth at that time. However, this assumption is based on silence rather than on Scripture. There is much evidence in Revelation that the saints are living and functioning on earth during the tribulation.

A. The great harvest of souls from all nations occurs during the tribulation. The Church will not be absent at the time of our greatest increase and effectiveness in evangelism.

Behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:9, 14)

This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)

B. The saints will overcome Satan and the Antichrist with great victory during the tribulation.

They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Rev. 12:11)

I who have the victory over the beast (Antichrist), over his image and over his on the sea of glass, having harps of God. (Rev. 15:2)

C. Some saints will be martyred during the tribulation. The Church must be on earth at that time.

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets... (Rev. 16:6)

I saw the woman (Harlot Babylon), drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Rev. 17:6)
In her (Harlot Babylon) was found the blood of prophets and saints... (Rev. 18:24)

He has avenged on her (Harlot Babylon) the blood of His servants shed by her. (Rev. 19:2)

holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her! (Rev. 18:20)

How You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (Rev. 6:10–11)

I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast (Antichrist)... (Rev. 20:4)

D. Satan and the Antichrist will war against the saints during the tribulation.

The dragon (Satan) was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 12:17)

It was granted to him (Antichrist) to make war with the Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. (Rev. 13:7, 10)

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. (Rev. 14:12–13)

E. The 144,000 Jewish servants of God are followers of Jesus.

Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed... (Rev. 7:3–4)

One hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their were redeemed from the earth. 4 the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. (Rev. 14:1–4)

They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (Rev. 9:4)

F. The saints' prayers during the tribulation will release the trumpet judgments.

Another given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. (Rev. 8:3–5)

G. Jesus comes back to earth in answer to the prayer of saints crying out for His return.

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)

H. Prophetic ministry will increase greatly during the tribulation (Rev. 11:3–6, 10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6–9; Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:17–21; Eph. 4:13; Dan. 11:33–35; 12:10). The seven thunders prophecies were sealed in John's generation with the intention of being released during the tribulation to the end-time prophets.

When the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write

them.” (Rev. 10:4)

I. The two witnesses or prophets will be born-again believers.

I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy 1,260 days... (Rev. 11:3)

These two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. (Rev. 11:10)

J. Calculating the number of the Antichrist will only be relevant to those living in the tribulation.

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666. (Rev. 13:18)

K. Believers who watch and prayer until the time of the bowl judgments (Rev. 16) will be blessed instead of suffering loss at the time of Jesus' Second Coming.

Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” (Rev. 16:15)

L. Only those on earth during the events prophesied by John are in a position to keep the prophecy.

Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” (Rev. 22:7)

M. An angel commands God's people to leave Babylon just prior to her final judgment in Rev. 18.

I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. (Rev. 18:4)

N. Jesus' bride is prepared in the context of the final judgment of Babylon during the tribulation (Rev. 19:1-10). An angel revealed to Daniel that the saints would be purified

during the pressures of the tribulation (Dan. 11:33–35; 12:10)

For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Rev. 19:7)

Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do the wise shall understand. (Dan. 12:10) {eoa}

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3 Ways to Exercise Your Spiritual Authority in the 2020 Election

God gave authority to mankind to rule over all that is in the earth. In Genesis 1:26-28, God declared that He created the human race to “rule” or “have dominion”—this is often referred to as the “dominion mandate.” In other words, as image bearers, made in God’s likeness, mankind’s call to rule is one of our primary job descriptions. Under the Lord’s leadership, the body of Christ is to exercise our authority in Christ through prayer and good works—this includes the civic act of voting. Prayer is more than personal piety, good works are more than personal kindness, and voting is more than a personal political preference; each is a manifestation of our rulership under Jesus’ headship.

Act 1: Prayer

“Therefore I exhort first of all that you make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for everyone, for kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Paul exhorted us to make it a priority to pray for all who are in authority, thus we are called to pray for presidents, senators, governors, mayors, police commissioners and everyone in between. Our prayers can affect the decisions a leader makes; those decisions influence our lifestyle, families and economies. One result of praying for those in authority is “that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness.”

The spiritual atmospheres of a city or nation can shift so that there is a peaceful social environment in which the body of Christ can more effectively mobilize to bring the gospel to others.

There are demonic assignments focused on deceiving and harassing governmental leaders. Satan, recognizing a leader's position, attacks the leader's mind and heart with "fiery darts" (NKJV) or "flaming arrows" (NIV), or demonically energized oppression, anger, agitation, fear, lust or bitterness (Eph. 6:12-18).

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places ... above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one ... praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:12, 16-18, NKJV).

God's people are the only people with the spiritual means to use Jesus' authority—as they pray.

There are demonic principalities and powers over each city and nation. There is an organized demonic kingdom that actively opposes God's purposes in an unseen realm called "the heavenly places." When believers pray, essentially by agreeing with God and disagreeing with the enemy, we participate in spiritual warfare prayers that wrestle demonic principalities. We proclaim God's will and victory in prayer, the supremacy of Jesus and His power, and promises in Scripture over our city or nation.

As a result of our prayers, the Spirit is empowered to release more supernatural activity, including ministering angels who drive back demons and usher in peace that can affect

presidential cabinet meetings, city halls and many such places. We pray that the Holy Spirit inspires political leaders to give right decrees that serve God's purpose. The heart of a political leader is in the hand of the Lord. The Lord can turn it like channels of water.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turns it to any place He will" (Prov. 21:1, MEV).

A leader has a free will, but if he has a peaceable mindset—even though he is an unbeliever—then his decisions will be different from those he may make when he is angry, fearful, jealous, bitter or oppressed. The leader still makes his own decisions, but under a very different influence, according to the angel or the demon who may be "putting his hand on their chest," so to speak.

The body of Christ must not neglect its privileged position in the heavenlies to affect world governments. Believers in agreement with Jesus' leadership make up the highest ruling body in the universe.

The prophet Daniel's prayers represent a prototype of petitions that shift earthly governments. Three times a day, Daniel set his heart to pray while in exile in a pagan land, Persia (Dan. 6:10). As a result of Daniel's commitment to pray and fast, the nation of Israel was set free from bondage and released into God's will and promise to return to Jerusalem. One example from his life that intercessors commonly refer to is found in Daniel 10. It describes a time when he had prayed and fasted for 21 days, and an angel appeared and spoke to him, allowing us to glimpse behind the veil into the spiritual ripple effect of one man's intercession.

"From the first day that you set your heart to ... humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days. So Michael, one of

the chief princes, came to help me" (Dan. 10:12b-13a).

This passage allows us to see how our prayers affect angels and demonic powers and principalities. Additionally, the reader understands that the intense conflict between high-ranking angels and demons is manifest in earthly spheres of government, which exist over each city and region of the world. Daniel's prayers got the angel through. Like Daniel, we can, in prayer, operate in the higher government of the spirit realm by exercising our authority in Christ to release angelic activity to bind demonic attacks, assignments and ideologies.

By seeing the power of prayer to affect governments, we can better understand Mary, Queen of Scots, who said, "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe."

Act 2: Good Works

A.J. Gordon once said, "You can do more than pray after you have prayed; but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."

"Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night? ... I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly (Luke 18:7-8a, NASB).

Jesus knew our works of justice would be far more effective when combined with night-and-day prayer that addresses the spiritual roots of injustice. Faith-based prayer and works are both necessary. When we serve the needy, the poor, the fatherless and the oppressed, we exalt Jesus by "doing justly" (see Mic. 6:8), a visible measurement of our invisible love for God.

Esther, Mordecai, Nehemiah, Daniel and others are biblical examples of God establishing people inside of wicked governments for the express purpose of influencing that government toward righteousness and justice for the oppressed.

Prayer was vital indeed, but insufficient. In addition to praying and fasting, each cried out for justice.

The clearest instruction concerning the relationship of prayer to justice is found in Isaiah 58, which depicts practical ways of doing works of justice with a spirit of mercy and humility. The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, says in verses 6-7 (NIV): "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

We must see the dignity of individuals who are being oppressed physically and spiritually, their worth in God's sight, so we may serve them well and demonstrate how God actively loves them. Consistent prayer will result in an increase of the measure of God's power released through our works of justice. People not only need practical help, but they need to experience God's power too. Though social injustice will not be eradicated from the world until Jesus returns, we can make a difference today when we combine prayer with works of justice.

Act 3: Voting

In the American model of government, the people lead the nation. Those we appoint with our vote are our ambassadors. Voting for presidents, congressional leaders, senators, governors and mayors is how we contend for righteous rule in our land, by virtue of a righteous representative and righteous legislation. Our government is a servant and embodiment of the will of the people; our moral and sober responsibility to vote within the legal provisions of our government is a prophetic and intercessory act in a constitutional republic.

Voting is not a light political choice based on some warm feeling about a candidate. Voting is a prophetic witness to a higher king and a higher law and an act of governmental rulership before the Lord. Our main objective in the political realm is not to get someone elected, but to be a faithful witness to Christ and His kingdom.

I urge people to vote biblical values without promoting either the Republican or Democratic parties. We are citizens of heaven engaging in a spiritual showdown that parallels Elijah and Jezebel. During Israel's darkest hours and greatest moral decline, God raised up intercessors and prophetic voices, instrumental in stemming the tide of apostasy. Believers today similarly confront the status quo with a burning zeal for the name and fame of God. We are a sign that God had not given up on the nation in its apostasy and moral decline.

We are called to be actively engaged in our cities and in the political process. Jesus said in Mark 12:17b (MEV), "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." In our republic, "Caesar" is made up of its citizens. We "render to Caesar" and exercise the dominion mandate given to Adam in Genesis 1 by praying for Caesar and its citizens, doing good works toward Caesar and its citizens and, as the true rulers of the U.S. government, voting in the upcoming 2020 elections.

In seeking to be salt and light in our culture, I so appreciate the stand that Charisma Media has taken in calling people to engage in the kingdom responsibility of voting biblical values. Why would a magazine, devoted for 45 years to inspiring people to encounter the power of the Spirit, address political issues? The Left has hijacked the term "political" so many things that are, in fact, spiritual principles, such as life and marriage, are considered "politics" and off limits to Christians.

For decades, we've been shunned from the public square and told to keep our religion and our piety within the four walls

of the church. I am grateful that at “such a time as this,” Charisma Media is calling many to take a bold and public stand for the Word of God—while backing it up with good works that include acts of intercession expressed both in prayer and in taking time to vote biblical values and more.

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Mike Bickle: Today's Christians Need to Become More Like This Godly Woman

The Christmas story is a remarkable testimony of how the Father used a young lady to partner with Him in bringing His Son to the earth. It is a glorious story that reveals how He leads His people and how He wants them to respond to His

leadership.

When the angel Gabriel told Mary she would conceive and bear the Messiah, Mary responded by trusting the Lord's leadership. God is looking for this kind of heart response in His people.

As we look at the Christmas story, we should not merely admire the nobility of Mary's choices. In fact, Mary's life is a model that can inspire us to respond rightly to God's leadership throughout our lives, especially in seasons when circumstances become difficult.

Good News

Gabriel visited Mary, saying, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" (Luke 1:28b, NKJV).

Can you imagine Gabriel appearing to you and declaring such wonderful things about your life? You would expect that being favored by God would mean you would have a life of remarkable blessed circumstances. However, the glorious promises of God that Mary received would unfold slowly through many surprising, difficult seasons. Mary would need to hold on to and remember Gabriel's encouraging words throughout her life as she carried the promises of God in her heart.

After greeting Mary, Gabriel told her she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and bear a Son, Jesus. He revealed to Mary that her Son would be great and would be called the Son of the Highest. Her Son, Jesus, would be given the throne of David and would reign forever. Gabriel was summarizing what Isaiah had prophesied hundreds of years earlier: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

Mary knew these prophetic Scriptures well, and now Gabriel

told her she would bear the Messiah of whom they foretold. But instead of shrinking back in fear or unbelief, Mary responded to these glorious promises with a willing heart for God to do to her as He had said. She believed Him.

Gabriel's initial charge for Mary to rejoice was a practical, pastoral exhortation she would engage in for the rest of her life as she carried these promises in her heart. It was not a one-time call of exuberance to explode with joy at the possibility of what was happening. Through the troubles and misunderstandings Mary would experience, she would continually need to lay hold of the command to rejoice and trust the Lord's good leadership in her life. Choosing to rejoice in God's promises despite hardship would realign Mary's heart repeatedly in the years ahead, strengthening her to persevere and to continue to grow in faith.

Favor and Adversity

What does a life look like under the favor of God? It is easy to miss some of the unexpected hardships Mary endured for decades to come. As spoken by the angel Gabriel, Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit. God was with her, but she initially experienced tremendous amounts of shame. After being visited by Gabriel, Mary traveled 100 miles south to Judah and spent over three months with Elizabeth. When Mary returned home to Nazareth, she was visibly pregnant. This was a serious issue because she had already been engaged to Joseph.

In the ancient world, a broken engagement would require a legal divorce. If she had been with another man, Mary would have been guilty by law to be stoned. Her story was that God made her pregnant. Mary would have seemed like a bold-faced liar or so delusional that it would have been another problem. Her fiance, Joseph, was deeply troubled, and rumors were spreading throughout her community. Over 30 years later, these same rumors of Mary's fornication were still being passed around in Jerusalem (John 8:41).

Before God stepped in and told him Mary was telling the truth, Joseph was planning to break off his relationship with her. The Lord was dramatically using Mary, but she experienced intense shame and misunderstanding from those she loved most. Through it all, Mary's heart was growing in love, faith and humility.

The way we grow in mature love, faith and humility is by choosing to trust God again and again in the face of unexpected hardships and the unexpected delay of some of His promises to us. When we are perplexed and want to operate in the flesh, but instead choose to stop and say, "God, I trust Your leadership," we are realigning our hearts with His heart and promises. In believing God's promises and responding with faith and gratitude despite difficulties, we are rejoicing as Mary did. Through this process of realigning our heart even thousands of times, we slowly grow in love, faith and humility. Mary did this repeatedly throughout her life, and, as she did, she matured in her love for the Lord and in her confidence in His good leadership.

Toward the end of Mary's pregnancy, she had to make the long, intense journey to Bethlehem with Joseph for the census. After they arrived, she was ready to give birth, but there was no room for them in the inn. She went through the agony of labor in a dirty stable and then had only a manger in which to lay her beloved newborn Son. I would have thought that since the angel Gabriel told Mary God's favor was upon her and she would bear a Son who would reign forever, the circumstances around His birth would have been a bit easier. Mary had received these great promises and endured the months of intense shame, but now she did not even have a proper place to deliver and care for her Son.

Despite the difficulties and human dynamics Mary experienced, a series of supernatural events surrounded Jesus' birth. Shortly after Jesus was born, some excited shepherds showed up, looking for a baby in a manger. An angel had told them

Christ the Savior had been born and was lying in a manger. The shepherds tell Mary they saw a host of angels praising God over her Son's birth. Later on, when Mary and Joseph went to dedicate Jesus in Jerusalem, two prophetic witnesses, Simeon and Anna, testified of Jesus' glorious identity. Afterward, wise men from the East brought gifts and came to worship Jesus.

After all Mary had endured since Gabriel's visit, these things confirmed the promises over Jesus' life and encouraged Mary that God was really with her. After all these glorious confirmations of the Lord's promises, I would have expected things to be a bit easier for Mary in the coming years. But although God was moving powerfully in Mary's life, the difficulties, delays and opportunities for discouragement were not over.

Not long after the Magi left, an angel visited Joseph in a dream, warning him to flee with his family to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill Jesus. Imagine this. Young Mary had borne the stigma and shame of her pregnancy among her friends and relatives; now she had to temporarily flee with her family to a foreign land because the government sought to destroy her little boy. Is this what a blessed and favored life looks like? There are sometimes very unexpected challenges in the midst of fully receiving and walking out the Lord's good promises.

Things became even more difficult for Mary down the road. Joseph was still there when Jesus was 12, but Mary was widowed sometime after that. Matthew 13:55-56 says Jesus had four brothers and several sisters. What does a widowed woman do with seven or eight children in their teens and younger? In addition to experiencing the pain and trauma of losing her husband, Mary would have faced incredible pressure as a widow with so many children.

When Jesus was 30, He took six weeks off from the carpenter's

shop to fast and pray in the wilderness. He returned home anointed by the Holy Spirit, and then the whole town He loved and grew up in turned against Him. He was a most reliable young man and had a phenomenal reputation; however, the elders of the synagogue were enraged by His claim to be the one of whom Isaiah prophesied. They were so angry they tried to drive Him off a cliff and kill Him (Luke 4:29).

Mary saw how her Son was so badly mistreated by the leaders of the town He grew up in, and she would have needed to realign her heart again and again in faith with the promises of God throughout His ministry. The angel Gabriel had initially told Mary that Jesus would be great (Luke 1:32). She must have struggled, wondering why the elders of His hometown were so against Him.

After Jesus began His ministry, His brothers did not believe Him (John 7:5). In essence, Mary's own children—whom she raised to honor the God of Israel—did not “believe in Jesus” even as young adults. Mary must have struggled with the spiritual condition of her sons at the time of Jesus' ministry. Some of her closest friends and family members considered Him to be mentally unstable because of the things He said and did (Mark 3:21). The top religious leaders in the nation concluded Jesus was demonized and was thus a dangerous cult leader who was deceiving the people (John 7:47, 8:48). Rumors of Jesus' mother's fornication were passed around in their attempt to discredit Him and His ministry (John 8:41).

In other words, Jesus' life and ministry did not appear to be “great” as Gabriel promised. By many standards, it seemed to be just the opposite. Again and again, Mary had to believe the promises of God and trust His good leadership.

A few years later, Mary watched her Son be rejected by the nation and die on a cross. The religious leaders plotted against Jesus, and the Jewish crowds cried out for Barabbas. Jesus' three and a half years of ministry appeared to have

little fruit. He had healed many thousands, but only 120 people believed in Him enough to make it to the prayer meeting in the upper room after His Resurrection (Acts 1:15). Mary endured unexpected pain and misunderstanding as she partnered with God and trusted His leadership in her life. Now her Son's earthly ministry came to an end, and He was rejected by the nation rather than exalted as King. The promises were long in coming, and it seemed impossible for them to be fulfilled. However, Mary had trusted God from the beginning, and she persevered in trust by the grace of God even here.

Mary only saw a partial fulfillment of the promises during her lifetime. She conceived by the Holy Spirit and brought forth the Son of God into the world according to the word of the Lord given through Gabriel. However, Gabriel also told Mary that her Son would be great and reign forever. While Jesus was on the earth, He was despised by many and rejected by His brothers, His hometown and the top political and spiritual leaders of His nation. He suffered and died to bring salvation to sinners before He was raised in glory.

The complete fulfillment of the promises over His life will not be until the age to come. A day is coming when He will be seen by all as great in love, power and mercy. Mary would have seen a glimpse of this during the revivals of the early church, but the fullness is yet future.

The Heart of Mary

Mary's life is a picture of the right heart-response to the leadership of God. When she did not fully understand, she trusted God's leadership over and over again. When it seemed to cost her everything, Mary still said, "May it be unto me according to Your word" (Luke 1:38b, MEV).

Mary's trust in God and her willingness to be used by Him and "to rejoice" in Him were not a one-time response. It was her way of life. She signed up time and time again through the

difficulties. She trusted God and repeatedly realigned her heart with God's word.

Rather than give up when things got hard, Mary persevered with joy by the grace of God.

Too often, we lose faith that God will fulfill His promises because we are not seeing immediate results to our prayers. Or we may conclude that our weak prayers are ineffectual. But the truth is that we offer our prayers in human weakness, but they ascend to God in power because of the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus and because they are in agreement with God's heart.

How do we demonstrate the faith of Mary even when our prayers feel weak or ineffective? Instead of measuring the effectiveness of our prayers by the results we see or the emotions we feel during a particular prayer time, we must measure it by what God says in His Word. Jesus declared in the Word that everyone who asks and keeps on asking will receive, and everyone who seeks and keeps on seeking will find (Matt. 7:7-8).

Our prayers—all of them—are heard, even if we do not feel anything when we offer them. Do not measure your prayers by how you feel when you pray them but by the extent to which they are in agreement with God's will and Word. Beloved, our weak prayer times may not move us, but they move the heart of God.

The apostle John emphasized that we can have confidence that our prayers are heard regardless of how we feel while we are praying. In 1 John 5:14, he wrote, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

God assesses the activity in our lives very differently than the way we assess it with our natural minds. The fullness of the glory of our lives in Christ is hidden from our own eyes as well as from the eyes of others in this age. Yet both the

glory of God and the promises made to Mary will become evident to all when Jesus appears at His Second Coming.

Colossians 3:3-4 says, "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then you also shall appear with Him in glory."

The challenge is that often we do not see the glory of God in our lives. Because it is indiscernible and hidden from our emotions and our five senses, we cannot measure it. We look at our lives as small, weak and boring, and yet Jesus sees them through the lens of the riches of glory. He sees what we don't see, and that includes our prayers.

Our many small acts of obedience, including our prayers, are glorious in God's eyes. By understanding the value of our weak prayers, we are empowered to see them as relevant and powerful. Though they may seem weak according to the flesh, every prayer in God's will matters to God.

The way God led and used Mary reflects His perfect leadership. The fulfillment of God's promises is often delayed and released in stages in a context of difficulty, in order to cause us to cling to Him in a way that helps us grow in love, faith and humility.

Being used by God to change history is not the same as being mature in love. God called Mary and then brought her on a journey to grow in greater love. God unfolds His purposes in a hostile world and uses the adversity to bring forth His people in mature love, humility and partnership.

God desires to partner with those who will trust Him through everything and continually say yes to Him without quitting. Like Mary, we need to realign our hearts in agreement with the promises of God and trust His leadership even in difficulties. God's promises are still real when delay and adversity come; the Lord uses these things for our good (Rom. 8:28).

When we choose to rejoice, hold on to the promises and trust God through the challenges, He releases grace and empowers us to persevere with joy and grow in love. If we do our part and respond to Him with a willing heart, God will do His part and impart abundant grace.

READ MORE: For more stories about Christmas, visit .

Mike Bickle is the director of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri, and author of several books.

CHARISMA is the only magazine dedicated to reporting on what the Holy Spirit is doing in the lives of believers around the world. If you are thirsty for more of God's presence and His Holy Spirit, subscribe to CHARISMA and join a family of believers who choose to live life in the Spirit. [CLICK HERE](#) for a special offer.

IHOPKC Celebrates 20th Anniversary With Renewed Holy-Spirit Vision

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary of 24/7 prayer with worship, our entire mission base at IHOPKC is looking back with heartfelt gratitude, even while looking forward with confidence and a renewed spirit of dedication.

I am grateful for how the Lord carefully walked us through a

multiyear season of refinement, including helping us overcome new obstacles while receiving insight into certain deficiencies and also stirring us to push back against encroaching spiritual dryness. Through it all, we have great anticipation that the Lord is about to bring answers and glorious surprises to us locally, as well as globally for the entire body of Christ—renewing, energizing, directing and encountering His people.

Locally, the Lord has emphasized His desire to help us grow in community with a deeper sense of belonging as a spiritual family. We are cooperating with Him as He raises up more strong families together with fathers and mothers who would receive and release the Spirit of the Father. The Lord is truly raising up an international family of affection.

Furthermore, we are to never lose sight the Spirit is raising up more than a workforce, but a bride with intimate partnership with Jesus. Thus, we seek to walk in the first commandment in loving Him with all of our heart and strength. We work “with Him” as His bride instead of merely working “for Him” as servants.

In His sovereignty, the Lord has ordained the prayer movement to be at the point of the arrow that releases His purposes throughout redemptive history. Before Jesus returns, the Spirit will raise up the greatest prayer movement in history that will openly give expression to His desire to be worshiped on earth as He is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). Indications of this include the fact that human history itself began with Adam and Eve enjoying daily prayer in the garden of Eden (Gen. 1-3).

Israel began as a nation at a prayer meeting in the wilderness (Ex. 19:6-20). Israel’s first building project was to build a “worship sanctuary” (Ex. 25:2, 8). One of the first things David did after becoming king over Jerusalem was to establish an extravagant worship ministry that included financing 4,000 musicians and 288 singers as their full-time occupation (1

Chr. 23:5; 25:7).

God even commanded David to call the kings of Israel after him to establish night-and-day worship in their generation (2 Chr. 29:25). Jesus began His public ministry in a prayer meeting in the wilderness (Matt. 4) and ended it in a prayer meeting in the garden of Gethsemane. The church began in a prayer meeting in the upper room (Acts 1-2) and will end natural history in context of a global prayer movement. Yes, the conflict at the end of the age will be between two “houses of prayer”—two global worship movements. We are confident that the glorious worship and prayer movement that exalts Jesus will totally prevail over the Antichrist’s dark worship movement (Rev. 13:8).

Along with many others around the earth, our longing is to see 24/7 worship and prayer in every tribe and tongue. We have gained significant ground in our pursuit of this divine mandate in coordination with many other sectors of the body of Christ. We celebrate our partnership with the missions movement and all that God is doing to expand His family and kingdom on the earth. We are very grateful for our partnership with YWAM—to cover this amazing ministry in prayer as they go forth to the nations to proclaim the fame of the name of Jesus.

In the last few months, the Lord has given us fresh understanding and energy: new ideas and new ways to mobilize, equip and relationally connect with many people across the nations. These are still unfolding, so we look forward to discussing them in more detail in the weeks and months to come. The year 2020 is truly shaping up to be one of rare clarity and renewed vision. The end-times prayer movement has always been a marathon event, but we recognize that we must also be agile and ready for times that are soon coming, that may require a sprinter’s speed, flexibility and action.

With 36 years of rich and powerful prophetic history related

to what He is doing in Kansas City, God is showing us afresh how far-reaching His plans are—far beyond our place in the city. From Kansas City to wherever you find yourself reading this, we are all a part of the great story of God. More to the point, we must never forget that at the highest level, this gigantic story line is wrapped up in massive global outpouring of the Spirit, the salvation of Israel and the return of a Jewish man, Jesus, to rule the nations from Jerusalem.

For many years, our prophetic history and story line were exciting to me because I thought that they indicated a fundamentally different kind of Christianity than the boring, simple, mundane church experience I had observed. At age 64, I view these remarkable events quite differently now. Our compelling prophetic history was never so we could be a special place but so we could give a clear, focused and specific call—the urgent call to walk out biblical Christianity now, become anchored in mature love, persevere and prevail in living faithfully.

The little things are big things. God wanted us to be a people of deep consecration, devotion and love. He surprised us by calling many of us to be “intercessory missionaries.” Though the idea has been maligned and mocked by some, I am certain this calling and lifestyle will be embraced by more and more people as the Lord highlights it more and more throughout the church worldwide.

Under much pressure, choosing to be an intercessory missionary can feel at times like a lesser calling to others because it has too often been accompanied with the lack of finance, stature and “success” as others define it. Yet the “muscle” that we are working as we engage in corporate prayer, fasting, waiting, contending, support-raising and pursuing depth and maturity in love is the daily declaration that Jesus is and will be worth the fight and the promises He has asked us to contend for.

These things are worth giving our lives to believe for and to birth in prayer. The primary themes in prophetic history include God's desire to birth a global intercession movement for the salvation of Israel (Rom. 11:26), a great harvest in nations (Rev. 7:9) and the maturity of the end-times church as a prepared bride (Rev. 19:7). These themselves have been overlooked by many, but I assure you the Lord will highlight them in a dramatic way in the days ahead.

The church across metro Kansas City has spiritual roots and an important calling: a global revival center, a prophetic and intercession movement with young people touching the end of the earth, promises that one day "no disease known to man" will stand before the name of Jesus and a commitment to apostolic power and authority through the preaching of His Word. Yet none of these things stand in isolation from the greater purpose. I believe there is a demonic assignment with intense accusation that stands against any who carry such promises, but God's grace is sufficient for all who say yes to it.

In closing, by that very same grace, we intend to step more and more into God's promises over this city, together with perseverance and tender hearts that are anchored and steady in the midst of the counterattack of the enemy to any who pursue revival, healing and greater power to exalt the name of Jesus and His Word. Ultimately, this glorifies Jesus because it puts His beauty and worth on display for all the nations to behold, amidst great wonder and perplexity.

For all of these reasons, believers locally and abroad are to ask and believe for a divine escort of the Holy Spirit into a place of greater love and abandonment to the purposes of God. There remain realms of divine love yet untouched by our hearts, unfathomed by our minds, unmet in our experience. This invitation is a beautiful inheritance intended for every member of our spiritual family as we lay hold of rich promises by His grace, but there is none richer than the Lord Himself.

As we press into maturity, with all of our being, let us be found embracing these values. The sacrifice to love Him and throw our lives into His good purposes will be well worth it all!

Mike Bickle is the director of the International House of Prayer, an evangelical missions organization based on 24/7 prayer with worship. He is also the founder of International House of Prayer University, which includes full-time ministry, music and media schools.

For the original article, visit .

Why Prayer Always Precedes God's Promises and Purposes

Prayers that *Strike the Mark* are guided by and endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the will and the Word of God.

As faithful prayer warriors align with God's heart, they focus on "prayer targets," under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in order to partner with Jesus in prayer that results in victory and breakthrough.

Such prayer warriors, relentlessly reminding God of His Word, call forth heavenly intervention so that the earth will one day be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Prayer Precedes God's Promises

Prayer always precedes the release of God's promises and purposes.

According to Luke 2, before the first coming of Jesus the Messiah, there was a devout man named Simeon and a prophetess named Anna who were looking and praying for His coming.

Their ministry of prayer and fasting was used by the Lord to confirm the fulfillment of the promise of a Redeemer.

Likewise, before the Second Coming of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is raising up a global company of men and women who meditate upon the Scriptures, minister to the Lord and intercede in unity with His heart and plan.

Collectively, their spiritual sacrifices rise before the throne of God as a great concert of prayer.

Worshipping Warriors and Praying Worshippers

For years, I have taught on the "harp and bowl" model of worship and prayer as depicted in Revelation 5:8.

Worshipping intercessors and praying worshippers are being united in this generation to "win for the Lamb the rewards of His suffering," as the centuries-old cry goes.

Like many of you, I long to see the day when the Spirit and the bride of Christ are in agreement so that all believers will declare, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*" (Revelation 22:20).

I have known James Goll for over 40 years. He served on the staff of the church that I pastored in the 1980s and 1990s. I have witnessed his zeal and faithfulness to engage in prayer and to teach about prayer in a consistent way over many years.

My friend James and I have walked through many peaks and valleys, and, by the grace of God, we have "kept our hand to the plow" (see Luke 9:62) in seeking to motivate, recruit, train and mobilize intercessors for the great end-time

revival.

We both long to be “worshippers of God and deliverers of men.”

James has not only been a person of prayer for years, but he is also one who has been given the grace of God to articulate and instruct people in the will, the Word, and the ways of God.

In *Strike the Mark*, he includes chapters such as “The Orchestra of Prayer,” “Coming into Agreement” and “Reminding God of His Word.”

This book will provide many practical insights into more effective prayer—prayer that is energized by a relationship with our most beautiful Lord Jesus and that is anchored in a victorious perspective.

It is for me a joy to commend to you this new equipping tool, *Strike the Mark*, for the Lord’s prayer army.

For the original article, visit .

Mike Bickle: We Believe Part of This Bob Jones Prophecy Will Come to Pass This Week

Join us by webstream for an historic gathering this week at IHOPKC at . Around 1,000 Chinese leaders and friends are coming to IHOPKC for four days this week (-22,

Wednesday–Saturday). The majority of these leaders and emerging leaders are from Asia and North America. I believe that this will be one of the most significant gatherings in IHOPKC's 19-year history.

I was overjoyed in receiving news that one of the purposes of Chinese guests in determining to come to Kansas City was to connect hearts with IHOPKC leadership team and community. They are calling this four-day gathering, "Convergence"—the idea is in seeing the convergence of the preaching the gospel in Asia to night-and-day prayer, and even to see the convergence of hundreds of Chinese ministry teams to a deep relationship with the IHOPKC community. What a joy, privilege and honor for us and for *you*—our extended IHOPKC family that often joins us by the webstream.

On the day that I met Bob Jones 35 years ago (March 7, 1983), he told me that when the Lord raised up 24/7 prayer with worship in our midst, He would then connect us to millions of Asians and their leadership in a powerful way. He said this would happen when we received the property that President Harry Truman once owned in Grandview (we received 125 acres of his land as a gift in 2008).

Next, on that same day in 1983, Bob prophesied a most perplexing thing—that millions of Asians would connect with us on what Bob called "unplugged TV sets" (he was speaking of what is now known as smartphones). All of this did not seem possible in 1983. Today, many Asians are connecting with us by the webstream on a regular basis. Bob told me that the Lord would do this because He would orchestrate a relationship with a future 24/7 prayer ministry in Kansas City with Asian leaders that would have an end-time global purpose.

Get Spirit-filled content delivered right to your inbox! Click here to subscribe to our newsletter.

We believe that this next week will be another big step toward

seeing this prophetic word come to pass.

In our gathering together with 1,000 Asian guests this week, we will also celebrate IHOPKC's 19th anniversary of 24/7 prayer with worship—our anniversary is this Wednesday, Sept. 19.

We see this as a “*kairos* moment,” thus it demands extra attention in the Spirit as we will likely be unpacking the ramifications of our deepened relationship with them during these four days—the impact of this will affect many for years to come. While we celebrate these events, we also feel a sober sense of stewardship.

Join us live in any of the eight sessions of the Chinese Convergence Gathering that will be shown live on the webstream. All the meetings are at Forerunner Church. The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday: 6 – 9 p.m. (celebrating IHOPKC's 19th anniversary)

Thursday and Friday: 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., 2:30 – 5 p.m. and 7:30 – 10 p.m.

Saturday: 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. {eoa}

Mike Bickle is the director of the International House of Prayer Missions Base of Kansas City, Missouri, and author of several books. For more information, visit or .

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4 Pastoral Challenges in the End Times

Our world is in a season of acceleration toward two momentous events: the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the greatest hour of pressure and trouble in all of history.

Isaiah said it clearly: “For the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall rise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you” (Isa. 60:2).

A time of deep darkness is coming, yet at the same time, the glory of God will be seen on His people in an unprecedented way. In essence, Haggai prophesied the same thing, declaring that the Lord will shake heaven and earth, the sea and all the nations, and much more. In context to this global shaking, multitudes will come to the Jesus who will be seen as “the Desire of All Nations.”

For thus says the Lord of hosts: “I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations [Jesus]” (Hag. 2:6a-7b, NKJV).

In other words, the greatest harvest of souls is coming in context to the end-time shaking of the nations. This shaking will be like a “perfect storm” affecting many areas of life—financial, political, societal, spiritual, military and much more.

Uniqueness of a Key Generation

The generation of Jesus’ return will have unique dynamics. There is only one generation that will see both the greatest revival and the greatest pressure in all history occurring at the same time. Thus, two great extremes come together in one timeframe. The dynamics are unique—nobody has ever walked that

path before. No other generation in history has had to navigate these two extremes. That is why the Lord put so much information in the Bible about that generation, so it is not surprising the Scripture highlights that particular generation much more than others. In fact, God's plan for the generation in which Jesus returns is the main focus in over 150 chapters in the Bible (see for a list of these).

To get a perspective on how important these 150-plus chapters are, consider that there are 89 chapters in the four Gospels that focus on Jesus' first coming to accomplish salvation. In contrast, more than 150 chapters in the Bible focus on what will happen when Jesus returns to openly rule the whole earth. (That one generation includes the decades leading up to Jesus' return and the decades immediately following it).

God's people easily receive the good news about a coming great revival. The challenge lies in interpreting the unprecedented pressures without being afraid or offended by the many negative events that will occur. Thus, God's people must understand the biblical narrative related to the coming pressure, or they will be left, by default, to embrace a secular narrative.

The secular narrative of current and future events is presently being expressed through many different media outlets. The problem with this narrative is that is based on many wrong ideas leading to many wrong conclusions. Some present ideas that are overly optimistic, refusing to acknowledge what the Bible says about the coming pressure. Others go to the other extreme and are overly pessimistic. Only by embracing the biblical narrative will God's people be able to process the pressures in a way that will help them to grow in love and faith with a steadfast hope in God.

Believers not grounded in the biblical narrative about the end times often promote the secular narrative or the secular interpretation of the increasing crisis. In fact, far too many

in the church are almost totally unaware of the biblical narrative in these more than 150 Bible chapters. Understanding the biblical narrative includes more than knowing a few general ideas about the end times; most are familiar with the fact of a coming Antichrist, the Great Tribulation and the rapture. But the Scripture has much more to say about what will happen in that generation and why.

People will respond according to the narrative they embrace. Those who don't understand the biblical narrative or storyline of unfolding events will be confused and even afraid. Many are perplexed as to where things are going as they seek to interpret society's increasing pressures and troubles. To them it seems like the train of history is veering off the tracks, and it feels as though no one really knows where things are going or why.

I have good news! The very God who can accurately predict the specific details occurring in the end times is the same God who has authority over them and can overrule the negative events causing them to work for the good of His people (Rom. 8:28). Since God has total control and deeply loves His people, we are in His good hands. We can stand in faith, filled with peace and thriving in love. Only those who interpret what is happening from God's point of view can respond with such faith and confidence.

4 Pastoral Challenges

There are also pastoral reasons we should pay attention to these 150 chapters of the Bible. I identify four negative responses Jesus warned the end-time church to be prepared to overcome. Again, I emphasize that people must understand the biblical narrative of what will happen or they will be left, by default, to embrace a secular narrative of the increasing pressures and crisis events, making them more vulnerable to be overcome by fear, offense, lust and deception.

Fear: Jesus warned that men's hearts will be overcome with fear in the end times if they are not properly equipped in the Word and walking in the Spirit. This warning applies to both believers and unbelievers. People who are overcome with fear are far more vulnerable to make terrible decisions. The Bible speaks of "men fainting from fear and expectation of what is coming on the inhabited earth" (Luke 21:26a, MEV).

Offense: Many will be offended at God and one another in context to the escalating pressures. People who are offended at the Lord cannot respond to Him with strong faith and wholehearted love. Some will be offended at Jesus' leadership because they grew up in a church that taught that things were mostly only going to get better or the Lord would rapture them before the trouble increased too much. Thus, they will question Jesus' leadership and whether the Bible is true.

"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another" (Matt. 24:10, NKJV).

3) Lust: Jesus warned His people not to allow their hearts to be weighed down with carousing and drunkenness. The word for "carousing" speaks of self-indulgence, with the main idea being immorality. Often people who are overwhelmed by fear or offense seek to find temporary relief from their pain in drunkenness, drugs and immorality. The explosion of immorality in our culture will intensify even more as internet technology provides many with opportunities to engage in it.

"Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [lust], drunkenness ... and that Day come on you unexpectedly (Luke 21:34, NKJV).

4) Deception: Jesus prophesied that the enemy will use false prophets for his deceptive purposes. "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many" (Matt. 24:11, MEV).

Do not think of false prophets as only cult leaders and crazy eccentric people with bizarre religious ideas. I believe some

of the most dangerous false prophets will be popular social reformers and media personalities who are dignified, cool, caring, intelligent and well-spoken. They will be very persuasive in their social commentary and in their call for new values and perspectives on social and sexual issues. They will come across as logical and even loving to those not grounded in God's Word. They will seek to rescue people and society from "old-fashioned" biblical values and perspectives. The enemy is raising new popular voices to spearhead counterfeit justice movements or mercy movements that claim to excel in love. They will use the biblical terms "justice, unity and love," but not in the same way the Bible defines them. These false voices will lead many people away from Jesus, the God of the Bible.

The End-Time Falling Away

Scripture clearly prophesies that some will fall away from their faith in the end times. This is one of the most tragic and serious realities in all of history.

"Now the Spirit clearly says that in last times some will depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1).

The combination of escalating fear, offense, lust and deception will result in some believers falling away (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7, 4:3-5; Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26-31, 39; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 20-22, 3:17). People who become fearful or offended are far more vulnerable to drift away from their faith because they are not able to make sense of the increasing pressures and troubles in the world. Paul presented the end-time falling away as obvious and as significant as the appearing of the Antichrist on the world stage.

"Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day [Jesus' return] will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed" (2 Thess.

2:3).

22 Biblical Signs of the Times

The Lord was gracious to give His people information about these increasing pressures with important details about the generation of His appearing. The biblical signs of the times include events and trends predicted in Scripture. In Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, Jesus identified 22 signs of the times—and 20 of them are negative.

The Old Testament prophets, Jesus and the apostles prophesied of the signs of the times to alert God's people who are alive in the generation of His return that His return is imminent. Now, for the first time in history, most of these signs are increasing and making global headline news. When all the signs accelerate at the same time, God's people are to know they are living in the generation of Christ's return.

The first mention of "all these things" (Matt. 24:33) refers to the signs of the times before and during the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:5-28). The second mention of "all these things" (Matt. 24:34b) refers to what occurs after the Great Tribulation, at the time of Jesus' return (Matt. 24:29-31).

"So also, when you shall see all these things, you know that it is near, even at the doors. ... this generation will not pass away until all these things shall take place" (Matt. 24:33-34).

It is possible that there are people alive on the earth today who may see Christ's return. It is not too early to become more familiar with the biblical storyline in the 150 chapters on the end times.

Full Understanding

The Lord promised to raise up people who will understand His end-time plans perfectly (see Jer. 23:20). To understand the

end times perfectly means to have a mature understanding of what the Scripture says about the end times.

“The anger of the Lord [His judgments] will not turn back until He has executed ... the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly” (Jer. 23:20).

We can only have mature understanding as we honor, relate to and learn from one another across the different streams in the body of Christ. No one group will have it all, but together, the body of Christ can gain a mature understanding. I believe that only in the collective wisdom of the body of Christ across the nations can we have a full understanding of the end times. We need each other to grow in strength and understanding.

We can be confident that the anger of the Lord against the Antichrist’s empire will not be turned back until God has executed and performed all the thoughts and plans of His heart. At that time, God’s people will understand perfectly. There is power in knowledge. We don’t have to be confused.

By having a robust biblical picture of the unique dynamics of the end times, God’s people will be equipped to have right expectations and interpretations of various negative events. By understanding the biblical narrative, God’s people will have the tools to process escalating pressures in a way that will help them to thrive spiritually and grow in love and faith. The Lord promised to raise up “people of understanding” who will help others understand the biblical narrative related to the end times.

“And those of the people who understand shall instruct many” (Dan. 11:33a, NKJV).

This passage had a partial fulfillment in the days of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), but the complete fulfillment will come in the end times.

The promise to be “one of the people of understanding” is available to any believer in Jesus who will search out what He says in the Scriptures. Remember, there are over 150 chapters in the Bible whose main focus is on the generation of the Lord’s return.

“Many,” or multitudes, will be hungry for answers from God’s Word. The Lord’s messengers will make the biblical narrative known in diverse ways to “many” in the body of Christ and to the uninstructed millions of unbelievers hungry for understanding. This information is to be used evangelistically in a way that may surprise us. Unbelievers are interested in knowing what the Bible says about the end times. By growing in understanding, we can be a part of the solution instead of adding to the confusion of those who embrace the secular narrative and are overcome with fear, offense, lust or deception.

MIKE BICKLE is director of the International House of Prayer Missions Base of Kansas City and founder of the International House of Prayer University. IHOP-KC combines 24/7 prayers for justice with 24/7 works of justice. Bickle is author of several books, including God’s Answer to the Growing Crisis, Passion for Jesus and Growing in the Prophetic.

“When all the signs accelerate at the same time, God’s people are to know they are living in the generation of Christ’s return.”

[Learn More](#)

Mike Bickle: 4 Prophetic Challenges the End-Times Church Must Face

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times often promote the secular narrative or the secular interpretation of the increasing crisis. In fact, far too many in the church are almost totally unaware of the biblical narrative in these more than 150 Bible chapters. Understanding the biblical narrative includes more than knowing a few general ideas about the end times; most are familiar with the fact of a coming Antichrist, the Great Tribulation and the rapture. But the Scripture has much more to say about what will happen in that generation and why.

People will respond according to the narrative they embrace. Those who don't understand the biblical narrative or storyline of unfolding events will be confused and even afraid. Many are perplexed as to where things are going as they seek to interpret society's increasing pressures and troubles. To them it seems like the train of history is veering off the tracks, and it feels as though no one really knows where things are going or why.

I have good news! The very God who can accurately predict the specific details occurring in the end times is the same God who has authority over them and can overrule the negative events causing them to work for the good of His people (Rom. 8:28). Since God has total control and deeply loves His people, we are in His good hands. We can stand in faith, filled with peace and thriving in love. Only those who interpret what is happening from God's point of view can respond with such faith and confidence.

4 Pastoral Challenges

There are also pastoral reasons we should pay attention to these 150 chapters of the Bible. I identify four negative responses Jesus warned the end-time church to be prepared to overcome. Again, I emphasize that people must understand the biblical narrative of what will happen or they will be left, by default, to embrace a secular narrative of the increasing pressures and crisis events, making them more vulnerable to be

overcome by fear, offense, lust and deception.

1. Fear: Jesus warned that men's hearts will be overcome with fear in the end times if they are not properly equipped in the Word and walking in the Spirit. This warning applies to both believers and unbelievers. People who are overcome with fear are far more vulnerable to make terrible decisions. The Bible speaks of "men fainting from fear and expectation of what is coming on the inhabited earth" (Luke 21:26a, MEV).

2. Offense: Many will be offended at God and one another in context to the escalating pressures. People who are offended at the Lord cannot respond to Him with strong faith and wholehearted love. Some will be offended at Jesus' leadership because they grew up in a church that taught that things were mostly only going to get better or the Lord would rapture them before the trouble increased too much. Thus, they will question Jesus' leadership and whether the Bible is true.

"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another" (Matt. 24:10, NKJV).

3. Lust: Jesus warned His people not to allow their hearts to be weighed down with carousing and drunkenness. The word for "carousing" speaks of self-indulgence, with the main idea being immorality. Often people who are overwhelmed by fear or offense seek to find temporary relief from their pain in drunkenness, drugs and immorality. The explosion of immorality in our culture will intensify even more as internet technology provides many with opportunities to engage in it.

"Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [lust], drunkenness ... and that Day come on you unexpectedly (Luke 21:34, NKJV).

4. Deception: Jesus prophesied that the enemy will use false prophets for his deceptive purposes. "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many" (Matt. 24:11, MEV).

Do not think of false prophets as only cult leaders and crazy eccentric people with bizarre religious ideas. I believe some of the most dangerous false prophets will be popular social reformers and media personalities who are dignified, cool, caring, intelligent and well-spoken. They will be very persuasive in their social commentary and in their call for new values and perspectives on social and sexual issues. They will come across as logical and even loving to those not grounded in God's Word. They will seek to rescue people and society from "old-fashioned" biblical values and perspectives. The enemy is raising new popular voices to spearhead counterfeit justice movements or mercy movements that claim to excel in love. They will use the biblical terms "justice, unity and love," but not in the same way the Bible defines them. These false voices will lead many people away from Jesus, the God of the Bible.

The End-Time Falling Away

Scripture clearly prophesies that some will fall away from their faith in the end times. This is one of the most tragic and serious realities in all of history.

"Now the Spirit clearly says that in last times some will depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1).

The combination of escalating fear, offense, lust and deception will result in some believers falling away (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7, 4:3-5; Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26-31, 39; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 20-22, 3:17). People who become fearful or offended are far more vulnerable to drift away from their faith because they are not able to make sense of the increasing pressures and troubles in the world. Paul presented the end-time falling away as obvious and as significant as the appearing of the Antichrist on the world stage.

"Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day

[Jesus' return] will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed" (2 Thess. 2:3).

22 Biblical Signs of the Times

The Lord was gracious to give His people information about these increasing pressures with important details about the generation of His appearing. The biblical signs of the times include events and trends predicted in Scripture. In Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, Jesus identified 22 signs of the times—and 20 of them are negative.

The Old Testament prophets, Jesus and the apostles prophesied of the signs of the times to alert God's people who are alive in the generation of His return that His return is imminent. Now, for the first time in history, most of these signs are increasing and making global headline news. When all the signs accelerate at the same time, God's people are to know they are living in the generation of Christ's return.

The first mention of "all these things" (Matt. 24:33) refers to the signs of the times before and during the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:5-28). The second mention of "all these things" (Matt. 24:34b) refers to what occurs after the Great Tribulation, at the time of Jesus' return (Matt. 24:29-31).

"So also, when you shall see all these things, you know that it is near, even at the doors. ... this generation will not pass away until all these things shall take place" (Matt. 24:33-34).

It is possible that there are people alive on the earth today who may see Christ's return. It is not too early to become more familiar with the biblical storyline in the 150 chapters on the end times.

Full Understanding

The Lord promised to raise up people who will understand His end-time plans perfectly (see Jer. 23:20). To understand the end times perfectly means to have a mature understanding of what the Scripture says about the end times.

“The anger of the Lord [His judgments] will not turn back until He has executed ... the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly” (Jer. 23:20).

We can only have mature understanding as we honor, relate to and learn from one another across the different streams in the body of Christ. No one group will have it all, but together, the body of Christ can gain a mature understanding. I believe that only in the collective wisdom of the body of Christ across the nations can we have a full understanding of the end times. We need each other to grow in strength and understanding.

We can be confident that the anger of the Lord against the Antichrist’s empire will not be turned back until God has executed and performed all the thoughts and plans of His heart. At that time, God’s people will understand perfectly. There is power in knowledge. We don’t have to be confused.

By having a robust biblical picture of the unique dynamics of the end times, God’s people will be equipped to have right expectations and interpretations of various negative events. By understanding the biblical narrative, God’s people will have the tools to process escalating pressures in a way that will help them to thrive spiritually and grow in love and faith. The Lord promised to raise up “people of understanding” who will help others understand the biblical narrative related to the end times.

“And those of the people who understand shall instruct many” (Dan. 11:33a, NKJV).

This passage had a partial fulfillment in the days of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), but the complete

fulfillment will come in the end times.

The promise to be “one of the people of understanding” is available to any believer in Jesus who will search out what He says in the Scriptures. Remember, there are over 150 chapters in the Bible whose main focus is on the generation of the Lord’s return.

“Many,” or multitudes, will be hungry for answers from God’s Word. The Lord’s messengers will make the biblical narrative known in diverse ways to “many” in the body of Christ and to the uninstructed millions of unbelievers hungry for understanding. This information is to be used evangelistically in a way that may surprise us. Unbelievers are interested in knowing what the Bible says about the end times. By growing in understanding, we can be a part of the solution instead of adding to the confusion of those who embrace the secular narrative and are overcome with fear, offense, lust or deception. {eoa}

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Mike Bickle Shares 3 Key Characteristics of the End-Times Prayer Movement

Jesus is not coming back to a prayerless Church, but to one that is operating in close partnership with Him in intercession for the end-time harvest (Rev. 22:17). The Holy Spirit is on the move, raising up a worldwide prayer and worship movement throughout the whole Body of Christ. The outcome will include the gospel being preached to all nations in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9,14).

The end-time prayer and worship movement is rapidly growing in the nations as the Holy Spirit works to establish a prayer culture in the Body of Christ before Jesus returns. Throughout the world He is raising up people with what I refer to as the “Anna calling” (Luke 2:37). The end-time Annas are radical believers who function as what I call “intercessory missionaries,” engaging in the work of intercession with worship as their full-time occupation.

The prophet Isaiah and King David, in the Psalms, gave us the most information about the end-time prayer and worship movement in terms of its earthly dimension, and the apostle John described it from a heavenly perspective in the book of Revelation. I will identify just seven of them, though there are many more.

The end-time prayer and worship movement will be God-centered, relational, continual, musical, global, missional and intergenerational. I believe that the end-time prayer movement will express worship “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt.

6:10) in a greater way than the worship-intercession model David established with the Levites in his generation.

1. The end-time prayer movement will be God-centered.

The premier distinction of the end-time prayer and worship movement will be the understanding of the supremacy of Jesus, particularly His majestic beauty as Bridegroom, King and Judge. End-time worship songs will emphasize the majesty of the Lord. Prophesying about the end-time prayer and worship movement, Isaiah said:

“They shall sing; for the majesty of the Lord they shall cry aloud ... From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: ‘Glory to the righteous!’” (Is. 24:14-16, NKJV).

The songs will focus on the Lord’s majesty and bring “glory to the Lord, as the Righteous One.” Some translations clarify Isaiah 24:16 by translating the phrase “the righteous” as “the Righteous One” (see the NIV and the NASB). Through these songs, worshipers will magnify the majesty of God.

Around the globe, people of all ages are catching a glimpse of the beauty, worth, and supremacy of Jesus and are responding in genuine love as they treasure and adore Him, giving a witness on the earth to His indescribable value.

The truth of Jesus’ worth and greatness must be declared in song and in prophetic proclamation, because it is the ultimate truth on which the whole created universe exists. The end-time prayer movement on earth will join the worship symphony in heaven, crying out, “Worthy is the Lamb!” (Rev. 5:12, MEV).

2. The end-time prayer movement will be relational.

The end-time prayer and worship movement will have a relational focus, which will be reflected in our singing of

the wonders of God's love for us and our response of love for Him. God is love, and He wants relationship with us—not because He is needy, but because He wants to share His love and to rule the earth in a deep partnership with His people. Love finds pleasure in relating to others and working closely with others.

Jesus desires to make us feel loved; He celebrates our dignity and value and wants us to do so too. He delights in us, in sharing His heart with and relating to us. He wants to partner with us in the work that His Father has entrusted to Him. He is pleased when we love, honor and magnify Him.

As King David did, we will sing songs about God's love for us. We will also sing new songs about our destiny as kings and priests ruling the earth with Jesus forever. We will sing of our love for Jesus, thanking Him for mercy and asking Him for help in times when our love is weak. We will sing of His kindness and of the marvel that He takes pleasure in weak people and imparts His very own beauty to us.

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord ... to give to them beauty for ashes” (Is. 61:2-3).

“Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us” (Ps. 90:17).

In tandem with the revelation of the Father heart of God is the understanding of Jesus as our Bridegroom King and of the Body of Christ as His cherished Bride (Eph.5:29-32). Thus we will sing of the Father's relating to us with tender mercy and of Jesus expressing His desire for His people as their Bridegroom God (Is. 54:5, 62:5; Rev. 22:17).

Before the Lord returns, members of the Church will see themselves as a Bride crying out to her Bridegroom King to come to her (Rev. 22:17,20). Even now the Holy Spirit is emphasizing the Church's identity as His cherished Bride.

Isaiah connected the revelation of Jesus as the Bridegroom with the end-time prayer movement that will continue night and day until the Lord returns to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth:

“You shall be called Hephzibah ... the Lord delights in you ... For ... as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. I have set watchmen [intercessors] on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night ... till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Is. 62:4-7, NKJV).

He prophesied that in the end times God’s people would be called “Hephzibah,” which in Hebrew carries the meaning of the Lord’s delighting in His people.

The God who delights in us is the very One who will set intercessors in place to worship and pray 24/7 until Jesus returns (Is. 62:6-7). His Holy Spirit is moving right now to raise up a multitude of men and women—singers, preachers, evangelists, writers, marketplace leaders, intercessors and so on—all over the world, who will proclaim that God delights in His people.

I have found that people are best motivated to sustain night-and-day intercession when they understand that God delights in them as a bridegroom delights in his bride.

In fact, one reason people burn out in intercession and ministry to others is that they lack the intimacy with God that comes from encountering Jesus as their Bridegroom God who delights in His relationship with them. In other words, the revelation of the Church as Jesus’ cherished Bride is essential to keeping our hearts alive through the years as we diligently do the work of the kingdom.

3. The end-time prayer movement (worship element) will be continual (Is. 62:6–7; Luke 18:7–8).

As the worship order around God's throne in heaven is continual, so worship on earth will be continual in many nations before Jesus returns. Isaiah prophesied of a time just before the Lord returns when He would set intercessors in place who would never be silent, day or night. Isaiah referred to them as watchmen "who remind the Lord."

"On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen [intercessors]; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:6-7, NASB).

Isaiah described prayer ministries that would continue 24/7 until the time when Jerusalem becomes a praise in the earth—that is, when Jesus returns to reign from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah prophesied the Lord's reign in Jerusalem when he decreed, "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord" (Jer. 3:17, MEV). And Jesus spoke of Jerusalem as "the city of the great King" (Matt. 5:35), anticipating the day when He would dwell there among His people, ruling the nations in partnership with them after He returns to earth.

Only one generation will see the fulfillment of God's promise to appoint watchmen-intercessors to pray "all day and all night" on Jerusalem's walls. Do you understand the significance of this promise?

God will sovereignly appoint and place intercessors in prayer ministries who will not stop praying for Jerusalem until Jesus returns. In ministries in Jerusalem and around the world, believers are taking hold of this prophetic promise and standing on the wall of intercession to cry out for the salvation of Jerusalem and the nations. Perhaps you will be

one of them!

Jesus made reference to the prophecy given by Isaiah when He spoke of those who would pray day and night and whose prayers would result in the release of justice (Luke 18:1-8). Jesus connected the call to continual prayer to the timing of His second coming. Also notice that in Luke 18:1, Jesus starts His parable with “then,” tying it back to what He had just taught about the end times in Luke 17:22-36.

“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart . . . ‘Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him...? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes [second coming], will He really find faith on the earth?’” (Luke 18:1,7-8).

In place of the word “avenge” in verses 7 and 8, many Bible translations use the phrase “bring about justice.” Jesus connected night-and-day prayer to God’s releasing justice on earth, especially in the generation in which the Son of Man comes back.

In verse 8, Jesus posed an important question about finding faith on earth. He was not asking if there would be believers on earth who had faith to become born again. He was asking if there would be people with the faith to agree with Him in bringing about justice through night-and-day prayer.

The Spirit is raising up many leaders in the Body of Christ who have faith (agreement with God) to work for justice in a way that flows from praying night and day for it. Most often, 24/7 prayer will arise from many local churches working together across a city or region.

I don’t believe the Lord is calling most individual local churches to start 24/7 prayer ministries on their own; rather, He is calling them to build a culture of prayer in their

churches and to work with other ministries to see 24/7 prayer and worship set up in their cities. In other words, unless the Lord specifically calls you to start 24/7 prayer in your congregation, it is best to participate in the collective effort of many local churches. {eoa}

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