

Write Heavenly Headlines Through Holy Spirit's Power

The news of impeachment hearings in Washington, D.C., missiles being fired from North Korea, raids in Baghdad and the fires in California fill the headlines of today.

However, let me assure you that what is happening today at the street address of your home is infinitely more important than any of these headline-grabbing events.

My father, who was perhaps the greatest man I have ever known, was a wise leader and mentor when it came to reminding his family of truth. Whenever we experienced friction in the family home, he was quick to remind us, "What happens at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue pales in comparison to what happens at 6555 Alleghany Road."

So, just for today, rather than being paralyzed by the fear of international skirmishes, national discord and situations that you are unable to control, let me remind you to choose to be a person of hope and compassion in the world that matters the most—*your* world.

When politics are imploding around you, build a home of strength and virtue that will stand the test of time. When the future of the economy remains fragile, continue to tithe, to give and to support ministries as a generous giver. When fear threatens to strangle the very potential out of your future, be a source of peace and joy to the people with whom you cross paths.

When nasty barbs are thrown around like missiles in a war zone, use your words as a bastion of kindness and encouragement to the people whose lives intersect with yours. When the headlines worsen day by day and you wonder how much longer this nation will survive, tie yourself to the promises

of God and find your sustenance there.

Every morning when you awake, rather than being fixated on the troubles of our society, on the downfall of morality and on the instability of our culture, choose to pray for someone. Ask the Father to give you divine appointments with people who need just a touch of goodwill and understanding today. Be the messenger of the Father in a world gone mad!

If you recognize the foolishness of politicians yelling at one another, don't yell at your family but use words of patience and graciousness. If you don't want the missiles of mass destruction to be aimed at the heart of a nation, then choose not to aim verbal or emotional missiles of destruction on the world in which you live.

If you dread reading about the ravages that are being caused by the fires in California, then determine that your tongue will not set any fires today or any other day.

You, as an ordinary woman, have the God-given power to change the world in which you live. You have more power in how you choose to live your life than you can ever imagine!

So live well, live with power and live with purpose! You create the headlines that are being written in heaven this very day, so write one of faith and purpose.

You, my friend, are a force to be reckoned with! {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books: *No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, *Defiant Joy!* and *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for

excellence in religious programming.

What God Told This Former Lesbian When She Struggled With Severe Temptation

Even after God called Jessica Newsome out of a homosexual lifestyle, the temptation still remained, and it scared her. An internal struggle ensued.

To overcome those feelings, Newsome knew she would have to surrender completely to God's will, and that it would be a difficult journey. But she realized it was the only way out.

And that's what Newsome wants to convey to others, whatever life issue they struggle with, through her nonprofit, Love at the Cross Ministries. On her podcast, "The Victory > the Struggle," she wants them to get the message that God's love conquers all.

"When God called me to give up the lifestyle, I didn't want to do it, because I was going back and forth with this internal battle," Newsome told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of "Greenelines" on the Charisma Podcast Network. "That seems like a miserable way to live. There were times when the enemy will try to tempt me the way he tempts me with any other thing."

“But what I did not understand was when God calls you out of it and you begin to walk with Him, He is trying to strip you of those sins that you’ve held on to for so long. He wants you to know that you are not in bondage to the sin life.

“I’ve been single for eight years because God’s like, ‘We’re going to do some deep work with you, Jessica. Take it nice and slow,’ which I love about Him. There are times when the enemy knocks on my door, opens it a bit and then breaks down the door and just rushes in to where I’m really struggling. But I have learned to say no and to ask God to help me to get right again. There’s a freedom and a joy, and I’m learning how to walk the way He wants me to walk.”

For the rest of Jessica’s incredible life journey, listen to this podcast. And tune in to her podcast, “The Victory > the Struggle,” on the Charisma Podcast Network.

Prophetic Word: The Lord Says, ‘Let Me Do the Unexpected’

Do you need God to take you into a totally new season right now? If so, the Lord has a word for you today!

There is such an expectation in the atmosphere right now. I believe that God is awakening a desire among His church to

walk in exceptional faith.

Exceptional faith is a faith that expects the unexpected.

Sometimes, if we are not careful, we will get used to just getting into a rut of the “same old, same old”! But we feel that God is challenging our faith in the spirit realm to expect the unexpected. I don’t know about you, but I never want to be found stale, ineffective, lethargic or growing cold in my relationship with Jesus. I want God’s very best, and I want to always be hot and not lukewarm toward Him.

I Hear the Lord Telling Us:

“You expect healing in your body from Me, but let Me do the unexpected: Let Me do creative miracles in your body!

“You are expecting for your children to be delivered and set free, but let Me fill them with My Holy Spirit and call them into a ministry to the nations!

“You expect for Me to get you out of debt; but let Me do exceedingly, abundantly above what you can ask or think—even to the point of millions!

“You expect Me to come through so you can get the apartment that you have been inquiring about. But I want you to lift your eyes in faith and believe for the home that you have been believing for. You haven’t even shared that dream with anyone; no one knows but Me!”

For the Lord Jehovah Says:

“Is there anything too hard for the Lord your God? I am waiting for someone who will allow Me to show Myself strong on their behalf. Let your faith soar in this season! Let Me do only what I can do.

“Expectation is what I thrive on. I love it when My children expect the great things from Me. It is My pleasure to give you

good things. Expect the unexpected to come through every avenue possible. I have told you that expectation is the key. So:

-Expect Me to show up in a message on your phone.

-Expect Me to come through a package left at your door.

-Expect that telephone call.

-Expect that promotion that will bring you to your knees in emotions.

-Expect the business to turn around so completely that your financial advisers go bananas with excitement and disbelief.

"Just expected the unexpected.

"This new level of expectation and faith is the place I desire for you always. I want to use you and your faith to change nations on My behalf. Don't just think personal things, though I want to always give you the very desires of your heart; but think bigger! I want to transform cities, regions, states, counties, countries, prime ministers, presidents, senators, congresspeople, Supreme Court justices and your *life!*"

You Are the Key

I will never forget being at the beach, right in the middle of our family vacation, when the Lord gave me a vision of a tsunami that is going to hit this world. In this daytime vision, I saw the water. As we moved closer to the water, we realized that what we were seeing was not water at all. The Holy Spirit said, "That's My glory!"

In the vision, I saw people groups swimming in the tsunami of glory. They were all speaking in unknown tongues. They were so very happy, swimming in the glory of God!

In this same vision, I also saw my daughters, surfing at the

very top of the tsunami. The Holy Spirit said, "There is a movement that is going to hit our youth. This youth revival is going to be one that we have never seen or experienced before. It will make the Jesus People Movement look like a barbecue."

With all of my heart, I believe we are right there! As a matter of fact, I feel some water beginning to cascade over us all.

I really believe expectation is the key to seeing the greatest move of God of our day. I know it will take prayer, fasting and seeking after this glory that was prophesied in order to see it come to pass. But I believe I hear some dry bones beginning to move.

There is an army arising that cannot be stopped, hindered or hushed! Our voices are beginning to rise, and heaven's ears are wide open. God's eyes are roaming throughout the earth, just looking for someone's heart that is completely His.

For the Lord Says:

"I know you are longing to see My glory as others have experienced it, but I only come to a seeking heart—especially a heart who seeks Me with all diligence. I am speaking through My prophets, My pastors, My teachers, My evangelists and My apostles. Hear the word of the Lord to prepare for the Third Great Awakening in your life!

"I am ready to do the unbelievable, the unthinkable and the undeniable in your life, in the lives of those you love and in the body of Christ—My church! Let Me be the captain of this boat called 'life.' Let Me charter you through these chaotic waters. When you do, we will walk on the water together. Your enemy has asked for you many times, that he would sift you as wheat, but I have prayed—and am praying for you—that your faith will not fail.

"You are an overcomer. This is the victory that overcomes the

world, even your faith.

“Faith will be the compass and the stern that will get you up and over. Never doubt My Word and My promises; they are steadfast and faithful.

“What if you knew that you could command your blessings? What if you knew that you have My ear at all times, and you can ask what you will? What if I gave you the power and the authority to move even mountains that may be in your way? What if I decided to give you the keys of David?

“All of these ‘what ifs’ are very true, My dear one! I have given all of these things to you and more. The only thing I ask is that you believe Me in faith. For if you ask anything according to My will, I hear you; and if you know that I hear you, then you have those things that you desire!

“It’s just that simple. That is why, by faith, you can expect the unexpected.

“Zacchaeus expected to see Me that day when He climbed the sycamore tree, but he didn’t expect Me to go home with him. Moses expected Me to deliver the children of Israel, but he didn’t expect to see My hind part when he asked for Me to show him My glory!

“Jacob expected to get his brother’s birthright privileges when he stole the blessing from his father. But he didn’t expect to be included in a name God gave Himself: the ‘God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Solomon expected to get his father’s throne as an inheritance, but he never expected to be named the most successful king that ever ruled.

“Esther knew that she was chosen by God, and that she had a good chance of getting crowned queen when she went before the king the first time. But she never expected the golden scepter to be handed to her the second time when she went before the king to intercede for the Jews.

“The things that I did for My children in the past, I stand ready to do again—but in a greater degree! Who will trust Me? Who will raise their faith level? Who will believe me?

“I am calling you to the exceptional. I am calling you to expect the unexpected. I am calling you to believe My Word, My promises and My decrees over you. Keep your eyes on Me, and I will lead you to the place of rest, peace, prosperity and promise. Look up to the heavens; today could be the day! Expect the unexpected!”

Give God a shout right now! Is the Lord speaking this word right to your heart? {eoa}

Judy Jacobs is internationally known for her declarative worship and powerful message of the gospel. She has ministered personally in over 50 countries, and has also ministered through several TV networks such as TBN, TBN Salsa, Inspiration Network, Daystar and through guest appearances with Sid Roth, Marcus and Joni Lamb, Dr. Jason Renville and many others. Pastor Judy serves as the co-pastor of Dwelling Place Church International. She is also the director of the international institute of mentoring and has published five books and eight solo albums. She is married to Pastor Jamie Tuttle, and together they have two daughters, Kaylee and Erica. Sign up for her free “How to Receive Miracles from God” email mini-course at her website, .

Is the American Church About to Die Off?

Is this the beginning or the end of the church in America? Is the church in America in decline?

Yes, for sure.

Most days, my inbox includes at least one post or blog about the American church. In many parts of America, people are attending services less or unplugging from church altogether.

This is certainly a story.

The greatest stories have beautiful endings. The greatest storyteller of all times is Jesus. His story and His church will end with victory, power, beauty and glory.

Is the church finished? Absolutely not.

U.S. church membership was 70% or higher from 1937 through 1976, falling modestly to an average of 68% in the 1970s through the 1990s. The past 20 years have seen an acceleration in the drop-off, with a 20-percentage-point decline since 1999 and more than half of that change occurring since the start of the current decade. In 1998 through 2000, 1 in 10 Americans with no religious preference said they belonged to a church, as did an average of 7% in the past three years.

In 20 short years, we have seen a 20% decline in church attendance. These numbers are shocking and true.

Does the mission of the church change because fewer people are attending? No.

God will just do His work with fewer people.

“Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, ‘Come, and

let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. Perhaps the Lord will work for us. For the Lord is not limited to save by many or by few'" (1 Sam. 14:6).

God completes His work with few or with many. God using fewer people does not change the Scripture or the mission of the church.

A lack of attendance never changes the plan of God.

The Church Has a Mission

A missional perspective teaches that the church has a mission because Jesus had a mission.

Here is an excerpt from :

What does it mean to be missional? "Missional" or "missional living" is a Christian term that, in essence, describes a missionary lifestyle. Being missional includes embracing the posture, the thinking, behaviors and practices of a missionary in order to reach others with the message of the gospel. The term "missional" gained its popularity toward the end of the 20th century and is beginning to influence the American church on a wide scale.

One definition says that the "missional church is a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose of being an agent of God's mission to the world. When the church is in mission, it is the true church."

Though many churches have mission statements or talk about the importance of having a mission, where missional churches differ is in their attitude toward the world: A missional church sees the mission as both its originating impulse and its organizing principle. It is patterned after what God has done in Jesus Christ; that is, to be missional means to be sent into the world – not to expect people to come to us. This

idea differentiates a missional church from an “attractional” church.

Many churches make the mistake of confusing “the church” as the mission of God, rather than knowing the church has a mission.

God created the mission first, and then He created the church to fulfill His mission.

The mission never changes, but the methods are always changing.

The mission of the church preceded any buildings or gatherings of believers. We can actually accomplish the mission of the church without buildings, hierarchy or religious activity.

God can fulfill His mission without buildings or hierarchy, but He has chosen to do it with and through His church.

Christians Are the Church

We have confused who and what the church is. The church is not a building, entity or organization. It is an organism made up of believers.

Our primary mission is not to attend church, though God commands us to gather and assemble. Driving to a church building is a method of attending church with other believers.

Buildings are where we gather, train and encourage one another. These were the methods Christ chose for us.

Here is an example of Jesus gathering and training His disciples:

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has,

to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore, I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand. And seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (Matt. 13:10-17, NKJV).

Training is a method of equipping believers to go to work and move through life being salt and light to our culture.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how shall it be made salty? It is from then on good for nothing but to be thrown out and to be trampled underfoot by men" (Matt. 5:13, MEV).

Salt preserves, heals and flavors. The church preserves our culture, heals wounds and flavors communities.

Training is a method to accomplish the mission. Our mission is to reach and encourage those who do not know Christ.

Could the reason people are not attending church be that God never intended for us to solely go to church but to be the church?

In my post "How the Church Connects and Collides with

Culture," I wrote:

Is the church obsolete? The organized church is experiencing a mass exodus of regular attenders. Are people losing faith or just dumping the church? We aren't sure.

The church will survive and even thrive.

Can we skip attending church services and still love Jesus? Yes. However, the Scripture commands us to gather in His name.

Church expert Carey Nieuwhof says: I have to remind myself that, mostly, my desire to skip, pull away and do my own thing on my schedule isn't solitude; it's isolation. And while solitude is a gift from God, isolation is a tool of the enemy. And there's no faster way to render a community ineffective than to isolate its members.

Yes, the church is in transition. Transition is not a surprise to God and is not unusual with God or His people.

Remember when the children of Israel left Egypt? Transition.

They walked through the wilderness. Transition.

During transition, God is always out in front.

"Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it to mind again, O transgressors. Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My good pleasure'" (Isa. 46:8-10).

Take notice that God finishes and then begins: "declaring the end from the beginning." God had a plan and then began. He finished the church, and then He started.

It's not the ugly end, but a beautiful beginning. {eoa}

Thomas McDaniels is a pastor/writer and the guy behind . He has written for and currently is a contributing writer for Fox News. He is also the Founder of and the Longview Dream Center in Longview, Texas. Thomas can be found on social media on Instagram and Twitter.

How to Pray Huge Prayers—And See Dramatic Results

For years, even as a pastor, Brian Phipps found it difficult to pray for big things in his life. He wanted to influence the kingdom in a big way, but didn't know how to pray it into existence.

What he discovered was that he needed simply to follow the message of obedience in Luke 16:10 of "he who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much."

"I'm one of these people that had a hard time praying big because I felt like it would require a big obedience," Phipps told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of "Greenelines" on the Charisma Podcast Network. "I wanted to pray for massive influence, but I felt like it would take too big of an effort.

"As I was reading Scripture, I realized that most of the people that had big influence had obeyed in the small things. I just started obeying in the small things. Jesus, what do you want to tell me today, and what do I need to do about what you're telling me today? Over time, it was the little steps of obedience that led to more catalytic-type influence and so I

just started praying that I would daily pray big and obey small. When you mess up, ask God how you can obey Him to fix the situation.

“Obedience in the moment brings character change over time. It’s never a light switch you can just turn on, though God can certainly do that. Change is always a journey. The Holy Spirit is applying salvation and sanctification in our lives. We just have to learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and that’s when transformation will come.”

Today Phipps is the founder and president of Disciples Made, a ministry that equips disciples with truth and wisdom to help transform communities.

For more about Phipps’ ministry on helping people find their kingdom calling, listen to this podcast.

This May Be the Greatest Deception Satan Uses on the Church Today

After coming to salvation at age 32, Don Britton began to notice some subtle and not-so-subtle deceptions about the American church. And it greatly troubled him.

In more than 37 years since then, Britton has embarked on a quest to expose what he calls some of the greatest “myths” in the church. His book *The Great Deception* reveals truths that some American Christians simply may not want to hear.

“To me, the biggest myth in the church today is that you can practice sin and live a carnal lifestyle and be passive and lazy and negligent to the things of God and still go to heaven just by having church attendance, by praying a sinner’s prayer or whatever you’ve done without committing yourself totally to the Lord,” Britton told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of “Greenelines” on the Charisma Podcast Network. “It’s called false grace.

“I wrote this book because it exposes the major doctrinal traditions that really affect your soul. I hope that a few people will read the book and have their lives transformed and be truly saved when they think they’ve been saved and they haven’t really. I exposed the lie about having a weekly worship-service existence versus having a life that’s offered up as a sacrifice to the Lord every day of the week. I exposed the myth of the sinner’s prayer, the myth of the rapture and the myth of the unconditional eternal security that people so trust in, in so many cases.

“Salvation is only found in a personal, passionate, whole-hearted, sincere, devoted and intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s where it’s at.”

Britton says some of the greatest biblical warriors most likely would not be welcome in today’s pulpits because they would “tell it like it is.”

“My main concern is why pastors don’t just stand up and say what John the Baptist would say,” Britton says. “I can only imagine if John the Baptist or Paul the apostle were to show up in any of our American churches and what they would have to say in view of the condition of our church today. It’s full of sin.”

For more of the myths Don Britton exposes in the today’s church, listen to this podcast.

Why You Should Never Lose Faith in What God Has Promised You

Godly patience is a character quality that sustains us—patience is a virtue. However, many of us grow impatient when waiting upon God for a promise to be fulfilled. In the delay, we can become discouraged if the season is long.

In the book of Proverbs, we read, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life” (Prov. 13:12).

Only hope anchored firmly in God and His promises can avoid discouragement during seasons of delay.

I want to share with you a story that illustrates that though God’s promises are delayed, we can fully trust Him for their fulfillment. The story also implies that we should not try and fulfill God’s promises in our own effort and strength. And finally, the story demonstrates that during our moments of greatest need, God sees and cares deeply about our situations and future.

The story I’m writing about is found in Genesis 16, with Abram, Sarai, Hagar and Ishmael:

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, ‘See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go into my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.’ And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. Then Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian,

and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. So, he went into Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between you and me."

So, Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

Now the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

The Angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." Then the Angel of the Lord said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." And the Angel of the Lord said to her:

*"Behold, you are with child,
And you shall bear a son.
You shall call his name Ishmael,
Because the Lord has heard your affliction.
He shall be a wild man;
His hand shall be against every man,
And every man's hand against him.
And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."*

Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen

Him who sees me?" Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram."

Ten years earlier, Abram believed God for a son. Now, he is 85 and Sarai 75. Their faith and hope weaken in God's promise for a son and to have many descendants. Here is a little more background before unpacking our Genesis 16 story.

God spoke to Abram in Genesis 12 and told him to leave his country, his family and his father's house to go to a land God would show him.

God promised to make from Abram a great nation, and all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. Years went by, and Abram and Sarai still found themselves childless.

How would all the families of the earth be blessed? Through the seed, or spiritual offspring of Abram, Paul wrote, "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). Paul elaborates in Gal. 3:15-18 that the promise was not to all the descendants of Abraham, but the promise was fulfilled in Christ and to those who are united with Jesus through faith.

Abram means *exalted father*. God would later rename Abram to Abraham, meaning *father of a multitude*.

In Genesis 15, God reaffirms His promises to Abram, and establishes what is known as the Abrahamic covenant with him (the Abrahamic Covenant is the OT model for the New Covenant in Jesus Christ). Abram believed God and His promise of a son and descendants, "And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith" (Gen. 15:6, NLT).

Paul quotes this in Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23. It is the basis for the NT teaching that God's way has always been by faith, as we obediently trust His word, which causes right living.

However, 10 years elapse, and no child is born.

Abram and Sarai, weakened in faith, devise a scheme (Gen. 16:2-4), which Paul describes as of the flesh: "But he who was of the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but he of the free woman through the promise" (Gal. 4:23).

All of God's promises are yes and amen, if we have the faith and patience to wait upon them. The struggle for most of us is delay.

Delay can occur for many reasons.

Sometimes it's our own unbelief and we find ourselves wandering aimlessly around another mountain instead of possessing what God has promised and given. Delay can also occur because of an unrenewed mind or strongholds in the mind.

Another reason for delay is rebellion against God, His word and promises. Jesus said clearly, "If you love Me, keep my commands!"

But, as in this case with Abram and Sarai, there is also God's delay. When God causes the delay, faith and patience are needed to inherit His promises (Heb. 6:12).

God allows tension between His promises and their fulfillment. Quite often, God's promises and prophecies over our lives have delay—sometimes years. It would be another 14 years before Abram and Sarai would have their own child, Isaac, the son of promise (see Gen. 17-18).

But like Abram and Sarah, when divine delay occurs, many of us try to bring about prophetic promise in the flesh! There is a timing that only God can orchestrate. Like a symphony

conductor, God knows exactly when every instrument, and every piece of the music, must be played in your life.

“Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son” (Gen. 18:14).

When God’s delay occurs, continue in the Spirit patiently, waiting upon the Lord to bring to pass the promise. “And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up” (Gal. 6:9).

I’ve had a season or two in my life where frustration gripped me. Tension occurred between the prophecy and fulfillment of what was promised. Sadly, like Abram and Sarai, decisions were made not of the Spirit or in God’s timing. Result: more pain, heartache and frustration. God is God—we are not! He only knows the timing of your life—trust Him.

Hagar Conceives and Sarai Becomes Angry at Her

Imagine Hagar’s pain. She is forced to have a child with Abram, knowing that by cultural standards the child would belong to her mistress Sarai. She has been taken advantage of and wronged. Hagar despises Sarai.

Sarai blames Abram for her maid’s attitude and condemns him for the situation! By the way, when we operate from human reasoning instead of Holy Spirit’s leading, we tend to become frustrated and angry. Left unrepentant, we tend to direct this toward others, and begin to shift blame.

Abram, operating from condemnation, yields to more human reasoning, “Well just send her away then!” Remember what Paul said in Romans:

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in

Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:1-2).

Your new life in Jesus empowers you to live in the superior law of the Spirit—above your flesh, your past and the legalism of religion apart from true faith in Christ.

Paul describes the birth of Ishmael as according to the flesh and the birth of Isaac as according to promise, and he states they are symbolic and represent the law and the new covenant in Christ (Gal. 4:21-31), where we are free from the bondage of legalistic religion. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17, ESV).

Hagar Flees From Sarai

In Gen. 16:6-7 we read that an angel appears to Hagar and tells her to return and submit herself to her mistress. God has a plan. If there are situations that are unsafe, we need to remove ourselves from those situations and place healthy boundaries around us or our family. But, at times, as with Hagar, God directs us to remain connected to others, as difficult and challenging as it may be, for His greater purposes.

Sometimes we flee connection and family because of the works of the flesh! It may be our wrong actions or the action of others—real or perceived. I am not making light of abusive situations, just pointing out that sometimes we run from the very place God is using to bring us into destiny.

Hagar, in a place of hopelessness and despair, encounters the Father, who gives her hope and speaks of her future.

The angel prophesies to Hagar about her son Ishmael (Gen. 16:10-12). The descendants of Ishmael roamed about the desert, often in conflict with others. Modern-day Arabs claim descent from Abraham and his son Ishmael; his brethren are the Jewish people. Keep in mind, God loves all people—Jew, Arab and every

race!

Ishmael means, "God hears!" In other words, God was declaring through the child's name that God heard Hagar's cry and God will hear our voice too.

By the way, every child has purpose and meaning. You are loved and valued by God, and so is all of humanity! God desires all men to be saved, to know how much He loves them and cares for them.

Her response: "You are the God who sees..." (Gen. 16:13, NIV). This is the Hebrew name of God, El Roi. This is the only occurrence of this covenant name for God in Scripture, and it occurs in a moment of despair and hopelessness, by someone despised, rejected and in the margins of society.

The message is clear for us: God hears and sees us in every difficult circumstance and we can trust Him, for God declares:

"For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

Sometimes we grow weary because of God's delay, like Abram and Sarai, or maybe we suffer because of the actions of others like Hagar, but God sees, and He knows the plans and purposes He has for us!

Sometimes our greatest encounters with God happen at our place of despair. During the difficulties and challenges of life, God will often suddenly appear to us when we least expect it. Be confident that God hears and sees—always!

Hagar returns and gives birth to a son. Abram honors Hagar, by calling the child Ishmael as she was instructed to do by the angel.

Hagar must have told Abram what had happened, for Abram honors the angel's instructions to Hagar by naming the boy Ishmael.

And in so doing, Abram affirms this child as his adopted son and heir to his family. This is precisely what Jesus has done for us! When we were without hope, God sent His son Jesus to bring us into adoption and God's family. Paul wrote in Galatians of this adoption:

“And because you are sons, God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying, ‘Abba, Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal. 4:6-7, MEV).

Abram, representative of the Father, affirms Hagar and Ishmael. The world is looking for love, acceptance and validation. As His representatives, we can bring others the Father's love and good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Final Thoughts

God hears your prayer and sees your situation. Don't lose faith in what He has promised you. God will bring it to pass in His perfect timing.

Continue to walk with Jesus faithfully, by obeying God's Word and by following the Spirit. Don't yield to the flesh or human reasoning. If you have, repent (change your thinking about the matter), ask God to forgive you and ask Him to restore faith in the promises He has made over your life! Know that God will answer your prayer—He hears and sees your need and the promises over your life!

For those reading who are in a difficult place, perhaps you have metaphorically fled to the wilderness because of the hardships of life. God wants to minister to you today! Like Hagar, remember you may encounter God's love, presence and power at your lowest moment when you least expect Him to break in. {eoa}

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How Some Men Totally Miss the True Meaning of the Word 'Helper'

In today's modern culture, even among believers in Yeshua, there is a lot of discussion about the roles of men and women. With this in mind, I wanted to write a little bit about one of the least discussed and yet possibly the most important role that exists for both men and women.

Let's begin by looking at Genesis 2:18: "Then *Adonai Elohim* said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. Let Me make a well-matched helper for him."

While this verse is quite familiar to almost all believers, far too many base their understanding of this verse upon the story from their children's Bible instead of what the words in the text actually say. As a result, *hasatan* (the adversary)

has been able to deceive men and women into being at odds with each other instead of being unified as G-D intended for them to be.

In verse 20, we find the word “helper,” or something similar in English translations. The word in Hebrew is עֵזֶר, or *ezer*, which can correctly be translated as “helper” in a very superficial or surface way. But the deeper meaning of the word *ezer* brings much more clarity and understanding to the intention of the word and, by doing so, it limits the opportunities of misinterpreting its intent.

In our modern world, men have misapplied and misused this word *ezer* (helper) to subjugate women into subordinate roles in ways never intended. The result of this poor interpretation is the mindset of a woman’s place being “barefoot and in the kitchen.” This is totally contrary to G-D’s description of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, which, by the way, would better be translated as “woman of valor,” which adds even more weight to the point I am making in this blog.

The word *ezer* does imply helping, but it is more specific to what type of help. Let’s look at some other verses in which this word appears. Exodus 18:4: “and the name of the other was Eliezer because he said, “For my father’s God is my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.”

Notice Eliezer’s name, which comes from the root word *ezer*, and means “G-D is my help.” Why? Because He delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Deuteronomy 33:7 says: “Now this is for Judah. He said, ‘Hear, Adonai, the voice of Judah! Bring him to his people. His hands contended for him, so You will be a help against his foes.’”

Here again, we see what type of help *ezer* demonstrates.

Psalms 33:20 tells us: “Our soul waits for Adonai— He is our help and our shield.”

Psalms 70:6 says: “But I am poor and needy—God, come quickly to me. You are my help and my deliverer—*Adonai*, do not delay.”

And Hosea 13:9 reveals: “It has corrupted you, O Israel, for you are against Me—against your Helper!”

There are many other verses using the word *ezer* in the Bible, but these should be enough for you to see that the meaning of helper is not “a servant,” but someone that aids in the battle. This is made even more clear when we include the Hebrew word עֵזֶר, or *neged*, that is translated as “for him” or “suitable for him,” which means someone who is opposite you, in sight of or in front of.

So, we see when we read this verse in its proper context, G-D did not think that it was not good for Adam to be alone because Adam needed a maid, a cook or a servant of any kind. It was not good for Adam to be alone because he needed a woman of valor to stand opposite of him with him in her sights so that she could be a helper to him by watching his back. {eoa}

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Discover the Ecstatic Realm

of the Seer Dimensions

Trances are not merely the domain of shamans, New Agers and DJs with pumping beats. A trance is not hypnosis, though hypnotized people do experience a trance-like state. Trances are not relegated to the realm of witches and warlocks, though these dark agents do use trances to enter into astral projection, a counterfeit of the biblical concept of being transported in the Spirit.

The enemy always works to counterfeit what God is doing, and because of this many have feared to even learn of the trance realm. The reality is that trances are biblical, and we need to understand what the Bible says about them.

What is a trance? Before we go any further, it's helpful to see various definitions that will lay a foundation for your faith.

Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines trance this way: "An ecstasy; a state in which the soul seems to have passed out of the body into celestial regions, or to be rapt into visions." A trance is a state of one who is "out of himself," according to *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. The word *trance* comes from the Greek word *ekstasis*, from which the word *ecstasy* is derived.

According to *The King James New Testament Greek Lexicon*, *ekstasis* means "a throwing of the mind out of its normal state, alienation of mind, whether such as makes a lunatic or that of a man who by some sudden emotion is transported as it were out of himself, so that in this rapt condition, although he is awake, his mind is drawn off from all surrounding objects and wholly fixed on things divine that he sees nothing but the forms and images lying within, and thinks that he perceives with his bodily eyes and ears realities shown him by God."

I suppose it's hard to describe it if you've not experienced

it, but *Smith's Bible Dictionary* goes a little deeper, saying a trance is: "The ... state in which a man has passed out of the usual order of his life, beyond the usual limits of consciousness and volition, being rapt in causes of this state are to be traced commonly to strong religious impressions. Whatever explanation may be given of it, it is true of many, if not of most, of those who have left the stamp of their own character on the religious history of mankind, that they have been liable to pass at times into this abnormal state."

The *International Bible Encyclopedia* defines trance this way: "The condition expressed by this word is a mental state in which the person affected is partially or wholly unconscious of objective sensations, but intensely alive to subjective impressions which, however they may be originated, are felt as if they were revelations from without. They may take the form of visual or auditory sensations or else of impressions of taste, smell, heat or cold, and sometimes these conditions precede epileptic seizures constituting what is named the aura epileptica."

What the Bible Says About Trances

We only see trances mentioned five times in the Bible, but that is more than enough to set a principle of a way God moves on us and speaks to us. By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established (see Deut. 19:15). We'll start with the Old Testament, where we see two mentions of trances and then move to the New Testament, where we see trances mentioned three times. (Find out more about this in my new book, *The Seer Dimensions*).

Balaam, the false prophet who a king tried to hire to curse Israel, went into a trance. We read about that in Numbers 24:1-4:

And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go as other times to seek for enchantments, but he

set his face toward the wilderness. Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling in their tents by their tribes, and the Spirit of God came on him. He took up his proverb and said: "Balaam the son of Beor has said, and the man whose eyes are open has said, he has said, who heard the words of God, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.

Notice when he fell into this trance, his eyes were open. He was not asleep, but it seemed he was in a sleep-like state, not moving.

Peter's Trance

Peter fell into a trance that opened his eyes to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Let's look at the entire account in Acts 10:10-17:

He became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they prepared a meal, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened, and a vessel like a great sheet, tied at the four corners, descending to him, and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth and wild beasts and reptiles and birds of the air. Then a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter said, "Not at all, Lord. For I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The voice spoke to him a second time: "What God has cleansed, do not call common." This happened three times. And again the vessel was taken up into heaven. Now while Peter wondered what this vision which he had seen might mean, the men who were sent by Cornelius had inquired for Simon's house and stood at the gate.

Notice that Peter saw a vision in the trance. Many people who fall into trances report having seen visions. Some others can't even describe what they have seen or didn't see anything.

Paul fell into a trance in Acts 22:17-21 in which the Lord gave him a warning and a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles:

“When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw Him saying to me, ‘Hurry! Get out of Jerusalem immediately, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ “I said, ‘Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You in every synagogue. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I was standing by consenting to his death, guarding the clothes of those who killed him.’ “Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”
{eoa}

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Why These Prophetically Significant Trends Should Alarm the Church

It is hard for me to realize, but I was born during the transition from the “Greatest Generation” to the post-World War II “Baby-Boomer Generation.” This statistical grouping is

designated roughly as those born after the end of WW II (1945) and before the assassination of President Kennedy (1963). Along with more than 76 million others, I am a Baby Boomer!

In those supposedly “peaceful” years of the early Boomer Generation, post-war families were started and the economy expanded to meet the demands of these demographic developments worldwide. Men and women still made public declarations of love and commitment to each other for life-long relationships and to joyfully have and nurture children in the ways of the Lord.

Today, many slow-to-mature millennials (born 1980-1994 and who may soon out-number the yet living adult Boomers) have become disillusioned with the political, cultural and climate changes around them. Some have become hardened pessimists and believe everything is bad and getting worse; bringing kids into this nightmarish world scape, they say, would be too expensive and tantamount to child abuse.

The practical and moral consequences of this kind of selfish thinking and private choices have contributed to the unprecedented worldwide trends of declining fertility and live births, not to mention the alarming rise of legal abortions and even euthanasia.

Democratic presidential candidates all affirm and promote abortion as a “right” and believe it should be part of women’s government-paid or subsidized health care coverages. Elizabeth Warren says abortion is “no different than having tonsils removed.”

So much for the sanctity of unborn human life.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Democratic “Congress-person” from New York’s Staten Island, represents this selfish, humanist, and escapist thinking when she says: “The world is going to end in 12 years. If you have kids, it will end in probably like six years or something because they’ll just

breathe more.”

A similar view is shared by a popular blogger, Marina Bridges, when she says: “The most progressive thing we can do is abort as many of the next generation as possible so they don’t have to be brought into this apocalyptic nightmare.”

Fertility rates now go up and down with short-term economic or social trends. For instance, in 2017 only 3.8 million babies were born in the United States. While that may sound substantial, it actually represents a drop in the U.S. fertility rate to only births per woman—the lowest rate ever recorded in our country.

This is alarming because this birth rate is less than what is needed to maintain our population, provide for our national defense, and care for our aging population. The same issues grip the modern-day leaders of Europe and westernized Asian nations.

Our world is smitten with “self-love.” Narcissistic people simply choose to live for themselves. Single-member households are expanding (by choice or circumstance) faster than any other subgroup in our country—and many other westernized nations.

In the face of shrinking families and fertility, many feminists are angry at “evolution” for having given them child-bearing organs. They reject the wisdom of King Solomon when he said:

- “Look, children are a gift of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a reward.
- As arrows in the hand of a mighty warrior, so are the children of one’s youth.
- Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; he shall not be ashamed when he speaks with the enemies at the gate.” (Psalm 127:3-5 MEV)

A statistically small percentage of deceived individuals wish to become other than their God-given, biological reality and God-replacing educators and doctors are enabling them in their psychological and emotional dysfunction.

Consequences of these narcissistic “human choices” cannot be escaped. Paul warned:

“Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.” (*Galatians 6:7 MEV*)

Most self-declared “leftist and progressive” men and women refuse to worship our Creator nor prize our human progeny. The prophet Isaiah declared:

Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint, nor is He weary? His understanding is inscrutable. (*Isaiah 40:28 MEV*).

God allows humans to make choices. We can choose good or evil and define morality as we wish. But God will have the last word on these “private choices.”

“They turned the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (Romans 1:25 MEV)

Our Lord God, Creator and sustainer of heaven and earth, will intervene by future, end-times judgments, as the Bible clearly speaks. (For example, read 2 Peter 2:1–3:18.)

Peter declared that:

“The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the Day of Judgment, especially those who walk after the flesh in pursuit of unclean desires, and despise speak evil of things they do not understand, and in their corruption they will be destroyed” (2 Peter 2:9-12 MEV).

Unquestionably, these alarming trends, selfish motives, and demographic crises affecting families, fertility, and feminists are markers for the Biblical end times and are prophetically significant. Therefore, while we are waiting for our Lord's prophetically promised return, let us "be diligent that you may be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14 MEV)

"Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20b MEV)

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