

CREATIVES... The Newest Church Fad? Or Is God Up to Something? (Part 1)

Within the last 5 years or so, there has been an influx of "CREATIVES" groups sprouting up within the church. Has anyone else noticed that? At first, I was annoyed by them as they seemed to be the newest church fad that puffed up some people while excluded others. To me, these groups seemed to suggest that certain gifted people in the arts were more important than others.

My personal belief is that since we're all created in God's image, and His first introduction to us is as Creator, we all have a certain amount of creativity to use in our daily lives, our professions, our worship, etc.

And this is absolutely true!

However, my perspective regarding these groups has since deviated from my initial disapproval. Holy Spirit reminded me of specific Scriptures regarding God's anointing on artisans and craftsmen (aka "creatives"). Perhaps God is up to something in the spirit realm with today's creative cohorts. And things that happen in the spirit realm always manifest in the natural as God prepares the natural to carry/hold/receive the supernatural.

Scripture reveals three times in which God clearly anointed and appointed artisans and craftsmen.

1. The building of the tabernacle (Exod. 31:1-11).
2. The building of King Solomon's Temple (1 Chron. 22).
3. The rebuilding of the first temple (Ezra 3:8-11).

These three places had one obvious and primary thing in common

... they were orchestrated and designed by God to be His dwelling place. The place where...

- Sacrifices and offerings were to be made and received.
- God would give His children direction.
- Atonement for sin was to be made.
- God's people would gather for the prophetic, yearly holy days and feasts.
- God promised to meet with them and relate to them.

As such, God was extremely elaborate in the details of all three holy constructions, and He expected His instructions to be followed precisely. Put it this way ... the initial directives took up seven chapters of the Bible (Exod. 25-31). From the Ark of the Covenant to the table to the lamp stand to the curtains to the frames to each of the entryways to the artwork to the altar to the Mercy Seat to the candlesticks to the embroidery of the priests' clothes and etc. Details included exact measurements, specific types of wood, precise colors of materials, various kinds of stones, gems and precious metals and the perfect position for everything, including the temple itself.

So what do these Old Testament scenarios have to do with the creative cohorts of today? I believe they serve the same purpose ... to usher in the presence of God.

Today's Temple

Jesus fulfills absolutely every prophecy regarding the Jewish Messiah. Not only did He become our high priest but He fulfilled the requirements of the firstborn Passover Lamb of God. He then became the final sacrifice as He willingly offered up His body as atonement for all our sins. He is quite literally our EVERYTHING!

But that's not all that His life, death and resurrection did. The veil was torn from top to bottom of God's dwelling place, thus signifying direct access to Father God through Christ. All of this made a way for what the Father had always desired ... an intimate, one-on-one relationship with His children. Jesus made that possible! Jesus's sacrifice made a way for our bodies to become the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

This is perhaps the greatest gift His beautiful sacrifice gave us. Think about it ... the Creator of the universe now dwells inside of us. We now have the ability to carry the same power that raised Christ from the dead (Rom 8:11; Eph. 1:19-20). Realizing the depth of all that Jesus did on that cross makes me want to leap for joy. If you take just a moment to truly ruminate on this, I believe you will feel likewise.

Shekinah Glory – Visible Manifestation of God's Presence on Earth

Though the Old Testament, the tabernacle and temple were where God dwelt and related to His children via detailed rituals; the actual, recorded physical presence of God (His Shekinah) only manifested a few times in Scripture.

This word (Shekinah) describes the visible manifestation of God on the earth, whose divine presence was portrayed through a natural occurrence. God's glory manifested as a cloud that surrounded and covered Mount Sinai as He gave Moses the Ten Commandments (the Law). A similar manifestation came after the building of both the tabernacle (Exod. 40:34) and Solomon's Temple (2 Chron 7:1). Remember that this was where God dwelt and promised to meet and speak to His people.

Interestingly, after the destruction of Solomon's Temple, sacrifices and offerings ceased until the rebuilding of what is referred to as Herod's Temple. This means that God's divine presence ceased as well. In fact, there is no record of God's Shekinah ever filling the rebuilt temple or anything after.

That is... until Jesus.

Jesus is Shekinah – the Visible Manifestation of God's Dwelling With Us

We see God's glory residing upon Mary while she was pregnant with Jesus (Zech. 2:5 & Luke 1:35). We also see it when the angels revealed His birth to the shepherds (Luke 2:9), His baptism (Matt 3:16) and His ascension to heaven (Acts 1:9). Jesus is the New Testament manifestation of God dwelling with us (Matt 1:23). But Jesus said it was better for us if He left so that His Spirit would come to us (John 16:5-15).

Since we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, those of us who unite with Jesus literally house the glory of God. God dwells in us! Even still, just as with the Old Testament structural dwelling places of God (the tabernacle and temple), there have been few instances where Shekinah completely consumed the New Testament Temple (collaboratively, our united bodies). I believe the complete manifestation of that glory cloud is on its way.

Not only is God preparing the hearts of His people to be able to fully receive His Shekinah, but I believe He is (and has been) anointing and appointing creatives in this very hour for such a time as this.

Read Part 2 in the coming weeks! {eoa}

Michele Lawson is a freelance writer focusing on Christian apologetics, prayer and biblical perspective regarding current events. She created a website that has a blog about her faith ().

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