

How This Scary 1975 Prophecy Is Coming to Pass in the American Church Right Now

According to the Pew Research Center, Christianity is declining in America. In the early 1990s, 86% of Americans identified themselves as Christian. By 2007 that number had dropped to 78.4%, and only 7 years later, in 2014, the percentage had dropped another 6% to 70.6%.

Over the same period, the percentage of Americans who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular,” has jumped dramatically. From 2007 to 2014 their number jumped more than six points, from 16.1% to 22.8%. Also, the number of Americans who identify with non-Christian faiths has grown, especially among Muslims and Hindus.

Our Shout Lacks Clout!

Interestingly, all of this has been happening while we have been “taking our cities for God,” “pulling down demonic strongholds,” “re-digging wells of revival” and launching a “new apostolic reformation.”

Surely, this discrepancy indicates that in our movement there is more talk than walk, more shout than clout and more symbolism than substance. Why is this the case? And what can we do about it?

A Vision of 3 Waves and Their Significance

After completing two years of Bible school in 1975, I saw a vivid vision that has never left me. During a time of prayer, I saw three overlapping waves, with each succeeding wave larger than the previous. I immediately and intuitively knew the meaning of each wave.

The first wave represented the charismatic renewal that was at its height when I saw the vision. The second wave, which emerged out of that renewal, represented a falling away. The third wave, which would emerge out of the second, represented an even greater revival and spiritual awakening.

Regarding the second wave—the falling away—I heard the words, “Jesus is a means and not an end.” In other words, the falling away would be characterized, not by a rejection of Jesus, but by a distortion of Jesus. He would be portrayed as a means to self-fulfillment rather than as the end and goal of life.

Loaves and Fishes Christians

This truth is vividly illustrated in the story surrounding the multiplying of the loaves and fishes in John 6:1-26. The group that had seen the miracle crosses the Sea of Galilee looking for Jesus. When they find Him, He confronts them for seeking Him as a means to their own comfort rather than because of who He is.

It happened after Jesus took one lad’s five barley loaves and two small fish and fed a great multitude. The people, seeing this miracle, were elated and decided to take Jesus by force and make Him a king. What a comfortable life He could make for them with this kind of power!

When Jesus saw their intention, he departed to a mountain to pray. Later that night He walked on the water and joined his disciples in their voyage to the other side of the sea. When the crowd who had seen the miracle on the other side of the sea finally found Him, they inquired as to when and how He had arrived on this side of the sea.

Jesus confronted their self-serving motives in seeking Him, saying, “Truly, truly I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled” (John 6:26).

In John's Gospel, the miracles that Jesus performs are called "signs" because they point to who He is as the Son of God. They are indicators of His Messiahship.

In this context, it is obvious that Jesus rebukes the people for seeking Him out of self-serving motives. They are not seeking Him because they recognize who He is. They are seeking Him for what they think they can get from Him. They see Jesus as a means to their own personal comfort rather than as the end and goal of life.

Worship: Who Is This For?

Recently, during a praise and worship service, I noted a troubling in my spirit. Outwardly, all was a picture of perfection. The musicians and singers were superb. The enthusiastic congregation shouted, danced and waved banners.

But as I pondered the disturbance in my inner person, the question occurred to me: *Who is this for?* The answer then became clear. This was for them. They were having fun. They enjoyed doing this. They were reveling in their own excellence and feeling good about their own expertise in "worship."

They were more enamored with the *means* of worship than with the *end* or object of worship. The prophet Zechariah addressed this same problem in the nation of Israel. He wrote,

"During those seventy years of exile when you fasted and mourned, was it really for Me? And even now in your holy festivals, you don't think about Me but only of pleasing yourselves" (Zech. 7:5-6, NLT).

The Meaning of Repentance

Charles Finney, the famous 19th century revivalist, pointed out that the end or goal of all sin is self-gratification. The act of sin is the means of pleasing self. Whether the sin is murder, adultery, gossiping or stealing, it is the means

toward the end of fulfilling a selfish need or desire.

According to Finney, repentance is the refocusing of a person's life so that self is no longer the end or goal. As Adam and Eve "turned from" God to selfish independence, we now turn from selfish independence "to God." The end of life is now to serve and please Him. Jesus is Lord. He is the focus. He is the one to whom we turn.

Contrary to this, in the currently popular gospel, repentance may not occur because self is not required to give up its central place. Self remains the *end* and Jesus is simply another *means* of satisfying self.

We Must Allow the Holy Spirit to Purge Our Message

Have we not fallen into the trap of preaching Jesus as a means rather than as the end? "Come to Jesus," the masses are exhorted! "Jesus will bless *you*! Jesus will heal *you*! Jesus will help *you*! Jesus will prosper *you*!" (especially if you will send a donation).

Now, all these things are true. Jesus is concerned about us. But according to the New Testament, these promises are the byproducts of the gospel, not its central message and core. The gospel is not about me. The gospel is about Him.

Because we have preached an anthropocentric (man-centered) gospel, our churches are filled with self-centered, immature Christians. They can speak in tongues and prophecy, but they have no real power to counter the forces of darkness making inroads into this nation.

A Fresh Vision of Jesus Will Bring the New Wave of Revival.

Ephesians 1:10 says that God will "gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10b, NKJV). The phrase "gather together in one" is the translation of a Greek word that means "sum" or "total." In other words, when all of God's activity

in time and eternity are totaled, it will add up to Jesus Christ. He is the end and goal of God's plan and purpose.

Let us, therefore, take "self" off the throne and enthrone Jesus as Lord. Let us not be afraid to present the demands of His character and grace to this generation. As we proclaim Him as the end and goal of life and eternity, I believe that greater wave of revival will roll across the churches of America. {eoa}

Dr. Eddie Hyatt received a commission from the Lord in 2009 to reconnect America with its roots in spiritual awakening and to pray for another Great Awakening across the land. His books on this topic are available from Amazon and his website at .