

What a Revival Generation Should Look Like

In every generation, God releases prophetic forerunners who define a new normal. These anointed vessels are often out of sync with the current generation.

They come with different values, different perceptions and different perspectives. These differences often set up a cycle of rejection:

- The current generation feels rejected by the prophetic forerunner.
- The prophetic forerunner is then rejected by the current generation.

Most of us have a tendency to think of the future activity of God on earth as an increase of that which we have known in the past or the present. But that limits God to our earthly perspective.

The activity of God is uniquely released from heaven for each generation. Every revival is unique. To embrace that which God is doing, we need to recognize His messengers even when they are different from our expectations. There are four hurdles we may need to overcome:

1. The Messenger
2. The Message
3. The Manifestation
4. The Method

The Messenger

God has many different messengers. Some are easy to embrace; some are difficult to embrace. We must be careful not to let

our preferences influence us wrongly. The important question to ask is this: "Which messenger (or messengers) is God sending to me?"

John the Baptist and Jesus were messengers for their time, but they were totally different to each other. Jesus made the following insightful observation about His generation:

"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the markets, calling to their friends, saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge to you, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a gluttonous man, a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is justified by her children" (Matt. 11:16-19).

John the Baptist and Jesus were rejected by many because they were perceived as excessive. The widespread influence of Greek and Roman culture had caused the ancient world to become far more global. John the Baptist couldn't have been more of a contradiction. He lived in the wilderness, wore camel skin garments and ate wild locusts and honey. In comparison, Jesus was up-to-date and cultured. In fact, Jesus was too free for the spiritual elite of the time.

The lifestyle and presentation of a messenger can be a rock of offense. Instead of rejecting a messenger ask the question, "What makes this messenger tick?" There is usually a connection between the motivation of a messenger and their lifestyle and presentation. When you understand what motivates a messenger, it is easier to accept them. Jesus' motivation was to seek and save the lost. That's why He was a friend of tax collectors and sinners. John the Baptist's motivation was to be "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." There are no distractions in the wilderness. John the Baptist and Jesus were motivated by the fear of God. They wanted what God

wanted—nothing more, nothing less. They were not influenced or controlled by the fear of man.

Messengers are also rejected because of over-familiarity. The people from Jesus' hometown couldn't receive Him as a prophet because they knew him as the son of Joseph and Mary.

The Message

God's messengers have a message that challenges earthly perspectives. If you hear and respond to the message your life will be transformed.

- John the Baptist was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. His message was intense and penetrating—but the cry came from heaven. Not everyone liked the message. It required change.
- Jesus' message went even further than John the Baptist's. Jesus preached a message of freedom from physical infirmity and demonic oppression. It almost seemed too good to be true.

The Manifestation

God's messengers release heavenly manifestations. Something happens. Because the manifestations are caused by God's Spirit, they are often dramatic. Manifestations are in your face. You can no longer go about business as usual. You have to make a choice.

- John the Baptist's message profoundly moved people. The proud were brought low and the humble were raised up. There was great sorrow and there was great joy.
- Jesus' message resulted in many dramatic healings and deliverances. The direct confrontation between light and darkness caused demons to scream with fear.
- The manifestations on the day of Pentecost were dramatic: The sound of a violent wind, flames of fire, exuberant proclamation in tongues, spiritual

intoxication.

Manifestations of the Spirit seem excessive to those who are earthly minded. Manifestations are clear evidences of the Spirit's work. When we reject the manifestations, we reject the Spirit.

The Method

Each messenger has a method.

- King Saul and young David were both anointed by God, but they had different methods of warfare. Saul used armor and sword. David used a sling and a stone. David tried on Saul's armor but he took it off again because he knew it wasn't going to work for him. To Saul and his army, it was unthinkable to come against Goliath with only a sling and a stone. David did the unthinkable.
- John the Baptist immersed people in water—an outward sign of inner surrender. That was inconvenient. It meant you got wet.
- Jesus used radically different methods in His ministry. The Israelites had never witnessed anything like it before. One time He even spit on the ground, mixed His spit with the dirt and then put it on a blind man's eyes. After the man washed the mud off, he could see.

God's messengers often use methods that are unconventional, inconvenient and incompatible with the accepted norm.

The Face of Revival

John the Baptist and Jesus came on the scene suddenly. During their thirty years of preparation, they remained hidden. The fruit of their ministries was a radically new generation. Within a few short years, the whole city of Jerusalem was shaken (Acts 5:28, 6:7). The kingdom of God advances most powerfully when a generation recognizes and receives the messengers God sends them. Prophetic forerunners become models

for new levels of anointing, new modes of operation and new ways of behavior. Every revival has a face—it looks like something. But here's what we need to know: Revival happens when we allow God's messengers to get in our faces.

We stand on the brink of a major spiritual advance. Prophetic forerunners will prepare the way. Let's make sure we don't become offended by the messenger, the message, the manifestation or the method. What will a revival generation look like? It will be different than you think—And much better. {eoa}

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