

The Sun Is Setting on the Church Age

A pleasant spring day took an unhappy turn as we all read Sunday's chilling headlines in our daily newspapers: *"What Would Be Our Response if Putin Turns to Nuclear Weapons in the War on Ukraine?"*

About all we nonpolitical plebes can do is shudder or mourn. That nuclear decision sits squarely on Joe Biden's shoulders. Bible-knowledgeable Christians, however, once the initial shock wanes, should rest easy. Prophetic Scripture clearly describes atomic warfare, but we're not there yet because much significant pre-war biblical prophecy remains unfulfilled.

The gospel is yet to be spread throughout the world, blossoming into full flowering of the great end-times harvest. Nevertheless, the times are roaring down on us like a vintage coal-fired locomotive—bells ringing, steam whistles screeching and lights flashing. A glorious end-times revival is not just stirring, it's boiling.

Most are unaware because this revival does not resemble the "mini-revivals" of our past. God's end-times revival will be Holy Ghost-driven, not human-driven. An underlying tide of small beginnings is swelling to the surface exponentially in thousands of small groups worldwide. Ask the missionaries—they know.

Pay attention! This final awakening will necessarily be like no other. In response, we all have to avoid the temptation of running to and fro, seeking promises of the Holy Spirit's move in this or that special place—events planned and exercised by mere fallible Christian celebrities (in keeping with the advice of Luke 17-23).

No! God's final gathering will be universal, unsullied by

human egos and the desire for acclaim. This time around, let's pay attention to the advice of Frank Bartleman, an architect of the great Azusa Street Revival in California that is still spreading throughout the world in scattered and distant lands, with an emphasis on South American and Mexico.

Keeping Ourselves Small

Bartleman recounts a conversation he had with God in which he was told: "I could have done more if you would have been smaller." Obviously, God was not scolding Bartleman for impeding his work. In fact, it is more likely Bartleman was just being a gentleman and taking the blame on his own shoulders for the significant errors of judgment on the part of a squabbling man and woman who actually shut down the operations for a distressing lapse of time.

It's also possible Bartleman was being obedient in part to John 3:30 in which the prophet says: "He must increase, but I must decrease," in reference to the coming of Jesus Christ. The primary author of the Azusa revival, a 21-year-old son of emancipated slaves named William J. Seymour, actually stood at the podium with a box over his head (How much smaller could he have made himself?).

People walking to the meetings were slain in the Spirit and falling in the streets and on the sidewalks because this was a sovereign move of God, and no man or woman was going to be allowed to interfere with it.

Likewise, it should be clear to all of us: The final revival will require everyone to back off and let the Holy Spirit do the heavy lifting. The move will only weaken as people leap in to assume roles of leadership or take on the trappings of authority. Impossible, you say? Well, then, you must advise the Holy Spirit that God is not really all-powerful and must let you in on the leadership action to be effective.

Our Valid Choices

There are only three ways we can jump in and help out without diminishing the work of the Holy Spirit in these times. 1) Counselors. Explaining why all the people are falling down and undergoing other signs of complete surrender to God's Spirit. 2) Teachers. Sharing truths of the human phenomena and the believers' rightful place in life under the authority of a loving and just God (as demonstrated in the Word and times of Jesus). 3) Helpers. Filling all categories of God's servant's work that must be done to maintain an orderly, healthy and fruitful environment among the newly saved crowds of those yielding to the saving power of the Holy Spirit.

You will notice I did not list pastors under any of these headings, not that they aren't important. They will just take on a new administrative role to provide sanctuaries and other administrative services as needed to accommodate their now-overcrowded facilities.

I recall a teaching of Colorado's Uncle Paul Eiselstein, founder of the famed IdRaHaJe (I'd Rather Have Jesus) Summer Youth Camps. "The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. If you interrupt Him when He is speaking to you, He will back off. If you ignore Him or override Him, He will allow it. Remember, He is gentle and will always lead those who listen to green pastures." Uncle Paul probably backed these claims with Proverbs 3:6 (NIV), "In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Handcuff the Pastors?

Remember that pastors tend to be extroverts, and those who try to exert authority or to somehow "direct" the revival process could only serve to get in the Holy Spirit's way, to step on His gentle toes, as happened at Azusa Street those many years ago. Those wanting to lead *could* actually block progress! How can I make such "outlandish" claims? Here is a hint:

In Genesis 6:6 we find the words: "The Lord regretted he had

made human beings on the earth and his heart was deeply troubled.” We know God is infallible. So how could he make a mistake by making mankind? Could it be that His desire to have a family is purely strong—and He is inexorably determined to not be seen as a dictator or tyrant? Above all other emotions, a need, a wanting must-have of His children’s genuine reflected love.

To ensure our eternal love, could He have granted to Himself something he would not control? Something on the order of a “complete freedom of choice that even he couldn’t contradict and would always have to just let it run?”

It wasn’t a matter of Him not being able to predict the widespread rebellion of mankind; He may have vowed to Himself that He wouldn’t in any way bind that freedom—a type of command to Himself in order to ensure the enshrined promised freedoms will always be unfettered. We find this a very comfortable promise of forever freedom of life with Him, with He Himself anchoring that truth.

There we have it. The coming revival will be worldwide and spontaneous, spreading into all places where the Holy Spirit is allowed to roam and act freely, without human interference. It will involve small groups acting independently. You, me and them, in millions of small groups and settings around the world.

Get prepared, watch for it and be prepared to jump in and fill one of the three roles waiting for you. You don’t have to search far; it will happen in your backyard as surely as the Lord will eventually intervene to end a nuclear war of no consequence to we raptured disciples.

I am not the first to prophesy these things. But I am happy to say I am in full agreement with those who first made the declarations and gladly accepting of my role among all those who are keeping these truths on a roll. {eo}

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