

Prophetic Word: The Lord Is Extending a Christmas Dare to His People

This Christmas, the Lord is extending a dare to His people. “I dare you...” Dares from Heaven to Earth are not flippant. They’re not like adolescent dares from our childhood peers, where the reward for our risk was a mere high five. When Heaven extends a dare, the Lord seeks to partner with a willing, obedient vessel in order to release something into the Earth. This year, the dare has everything to do with how we engage the spiritual airways during the Christmas season.

Is Christmas Magical?

No, there is no “magic of Christmas.” I’m sure Disney and the Hallmark channel would disagree on this one. The reality is, yes, there is something unique and special in the air when the calendar shifts the nations into this time of year. Why? No magic; just Scripture coming to pass. Psalm 22:3 reminds us that God inhabits the praises of His people. Imagine what this looks like on a global scale!

While there are many factors that contribute to the so-called “magic” of Christmas, perhaps, the top contributor to the “different” atmosphere this time of year is the blatant declaration of truth concerning the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. This comes through the Christmas carols that are being released into the airways in coffee shops, malls and even gyms.

Consider these familiar lyrics:

“Glory to the newborn King!”

“King forever, ceasing never.”

“Let Earth receive her King!”

“Jesus Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day to save us all from Satan’s power.”

In the same way we encourage people not to “go through the motions” as they sing popular praise choruses, we must provide this same encouragement during Christmas season.

I believe the Lord has two assignments for us this Christmas: 1) Plug the power back in when it comes to our Christmas church gatherings and services, and 2) receive our assignments to partner with the intercessory declarations that are released over the airways through Christmas carols.

The Longing of Humanity ... at Christmas and Always

Christmas carols contain some of the most powerful intercessory decrees and revelation about Jesus. Why, then, does it feel like when Christian culture transitions over to the Christmas calendar, we often go into “showtime” mode. In our quest to genuinely help connect people with God, we sadly abandon the very One—the Holy Spirit—who is the only one who can legitimately bridge the gulf between lost mankind and a holy God.

In our attempts to provide “inoffensive” experiences for people to be exposed to Jesus, we often disconnect from the supernatural power of the Spirit. He is the only source that will ultimately satisfy the deep longing of everythirsty human heart. David recognized this in Psalm 63:1—we live in a “a dry and thirsty land with no water.” Apart from an encounter with the living God, that’s very true—there is no source of fulfillment for the cry of the human heart. And yet, even though nothing in the world can satisfy this longing, “there is a River.”

Jesus announced in John 7 that there is a River residing within us. He’s a Person called Holy Spirit, and He is meant

to be released: “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” (Jn. 7:38). The key word is “out.” Out of you, out of me, out of this community called the church will flow the very life-giving, thirst-quenching water that has the potential to satisfy every desperate cry of a “dry and thirsty land.”

If there was any time during the calendar year when the Holy Spirit should be moving with unusual power in our gatherings, it should be at Christmas. And yet, this is the very time where we tend to “mute” the supernatural in favor of something that will not offend “new people” or “people seeking a relationship with God.” Have we forgotten that it’s the Holy Spirit who bridges the gulf between lost humanity and God Almighty?

There is nothing wrong with our concerts and cantatas, productions and pageants.

Enjoy the candle lighting services and tree lighting events!

Preach the Christmas-themed sermon series throughout the month of December!

Integrate Christmas carols into the standard praise and worship sets.

But here is where heaven’s dare comes in. It’s as though when we start singing the “Christmas carols,” we go into a different mode. Performance mode, maybe? Somehow, we see the Christmas carols as traditional fare of the season. We sing them with smiles on our faces and warmth in our hearts, sure, but little expectation of divine encounter. After all, “they’re just Christmas carols.” This is where we need to recapture the awe and wonder of the profound realities these carols announce!

What Shuts Down the Flow of Supernatural Power at Christmas?

Immediately, the Lord reminded me of a Gospel account that is

comparable to what we face during the Christmas season today.

In Mark 6, Jesus comes to his hometown of Nazareth. On the Sabbath, He proceeds to teach in the synagogue. What an amazing scene: Nazareth was experiencing a divine visitation by the very Son of God! Consider the supernatural possibilities that were available to Nazareth because of the Presence of Jesus. And yet, Nazareth missed its moment of divine visitation.

Mark 6:2 says, "When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get this? What is this wisdom that is given Him, that even miracles are done by His hands?"

We are meant to live astonished by the wonder of Jesus. Motivated by this level of awe, we would approach singing Christmas carols in a very different way. Rather than seasonal tradition, they would become impassioned anthems of praise. Awe and wonder incite genuine praise and worship and thus, create an atmosphere for God's power to move without restraint. On the other hand, familiarity pulls the plug on divine power. If only Nazareth stayed astonished by Jesus. If only we could stay astonished. What pulled the plug on divine power? In Nazareth back then, and for us today, the culprit is familiarity.

"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary and the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relatives, and in his own house." He could not do any miracles there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He was amazed because of their unbelief." (Mark 6:3-6)

He wasn't the Son of God, the Miracle Worker, or even the

Prophet of the Lord. He was “the carpenter, the Son of Mary.”

Unbelief didn't make Jesus less powerful; it simply prevented the community in Nazareth from having an appropriate level of expectation of what Jesus could do in their midst. Nazareth could have experienced a divine visitation. The dead could have been raised, the sick healed, and the demonized delivered. The Kingdom could have come with dynamic power to that community. It did and didn't. Jesus, the King of the kingdom, had come.

Unbelief doesn't change Jesus' nature; it simply prevents those who embrace familiarity from experiencing His power.

Likewise, our religious, traditional, familiar approach to the Christmas season has the potential to pull out the plug of divine power. The Holy Spirit is powerful, period. Our unbelief or familiarity with Him does not change Him; it simply changes what we have the potential to experience from Him.

The airwaves are ripe with possibility. As it was in Nazareth, so it is today. Will we be apathetic or awakened? Familiar or fascinated?

What would happen if we sang a familiar carol like “O Holy Night,” from a heart of awe and expectation, and the lyrics became manifestation? Could you even imagine a church service at Christmastime, where the entire congregation is gripped by the fear of the Lord and falls prostrate before the Presence of God during the carols?

What if the church fell to its knees as the people sang these lyrics in worshipful adoration?

What if the gathering became a “thin place,” where Heaven and Earth interacted with increased ease and intensity?

What if we could literally hear “angel voices” and witness angelic activity in the midst of worshipping with these carols?

What if we declared the lyrics “Chains shall He break...” and “in His name all oppression shall cease,” and people experienced divine healing and supernatural deliverance?

I believe God is daring His people to welcome His Spirit, engage the Christmas season with Kingdom expectation, and partner with the declarations being released over the airways.

Your Call to ‘Boots-to-the-Ground’ Intercession

You have influence in the environments you carry Holy Spirit into. Perhaps the greatest assignment the Lord extends to His people during this season, other than evangelism, is intercession. And it’s boots on the ground intercession. We’re not in some prayer chamber, isolated from the world. God wants His church right in the middle of where hurting people are. And where there are people, there are problems. There is torment. There is oppression. There is sickness. There is bitterness. There is family strife. There are broken marriages. There is seasonal depression. This is what people carry around with them into the environments you interact with every day.

What if the Christmas carols playing in the background became an opportunity for you to pray in agreement with the lyrics being sung? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you become a spiritual governor of the different atmospheres you come into contact with by: 1) hearing the lyrics being sung, 2) bringing your prayers into agreement with the lyrics and 3) asking Holy Spirit to show you how to partner with the truth being released through these carols to see His Kingdom come this Christmas. {eoa}

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