
God's Vision For the Last-Day Church!

By David Wilkerson

May 23, 1994 I want to share with you what I believe is God's vision for His last-day church. It is a vision based on the revealed Word of God -- because the Bible clearly outlines what the church of Jesus Christ will be like just prior to His coming.

Certainly, the church in America is far from what God has envisioned it to be. In fact, most of what we see going on today in the name of Christ is an abomination. Yet, there are remnant churches scattered throughout this nation and around the world that live up to God's holy standards. They lead holy lives, preach righteousness, believe in super natural works. These churches are alive, full of the Spirit of God, and are impacting lives and entire communities for Jesus.

But, for the most part, entire denominations today operate without the Holy Spirit. They are devoid of the presence of Jesus, bankrupt of all spiritual gifts. They practice a form of religion without any power, conviction or saving message. They are cozy with the world and are more political than spiritual. They appease sin -- coddling homosexuals, winking at divorce, ridiculing the supernatural, tossing aside all teachings about heaven, hell, repentance and judgment.

Such churches wonder if God is even alive. They are so cold, weak and timid, the world scoffs at them! They have no influence, no respect, no impact on society whatsoever.

But the New Testament church made devils tremble! It drove legions of demons into the abyss, prayed prison doors open, made rulers cringe in fear. No weapon could prosper against it! Those early believers had such faith and power that cripples rose up leaping, beggars became evangelists. They believed in the supernatural -- and they opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears and healed all manner of diseases. They even raised the dead!

I am not saying God's last-day church will be a repeat or copy of the first- century church. No -- I am saying it will be even greater than that! It will be mightier, stronger, with an even greater revelation of Jesus. It will have a greater unction from the Spirit than ever -- greater even than at Pentecost! God always saves His best wine for last!

The prophet Daniel confirms this. He said certain prophetic truths were locked up, only to be revealed in the last days:

"...for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end....and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:9-10).

God's people are going to begin to understand "new things in his Word!" These things are already in the Bible; they simply haven't been revealed in fullness. And Daniel said he saw these things but couldn't understand them, even with all his divine wisdom: "And I heard, but I understood not..." (verse 8).

But today the Holy Spirit has revealed these things to spiritual, discerning saints!

"...as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

The Holy Ghost abides in us to reveal these hidden things to us!

Right now the Lord is preparing a powerful yet humble army of shepherds after His own heart. And He also is preparing a remnant congregation of hungry sheep who have turned away from the deadness and sin of the modern church establishment. The scene is being set for that church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. It will be hot, not lukewarm -- and it will rock the very foundations of hell. No power on earth will be able to ignore or despise it!

Here is what I see in the Scriptures as God's vision for this last-day remnant church:

1. Once Again the Gospel Is Going to Be "Fully Preached"! You may not want to accept my next statement. But, as I see it, the gospel of Jesus Christ has not been "fully preached" in this generation! Except for the ministries of a few righteous men and women of God, the gospel we hear today is not what Paul said is a gospel "fully preached."

Paul could say to his generation: "...I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19). And he described this "fully preached" gospel as one that is much more than words. It is a gospel of words and deed!

"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient in word and deed..." (verse 18).

Paul was saying, "The Gentiles turned to Christ not because of my preaching alone -- but because my words were accompanied by miraculous deeds!"

"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (verse 19).

If Paul had preached and taught without signs and wonders following, his message would not have had its full impact. It would not have been the gospel fully preached! He said to the Corinthians, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Corinthians 12:12).

Note Paul's words in this verse: signs, wonders, mighty deeds. Most Christians today cringe when they hear them! Why? It is because these words have been made an abomination by unscrupulous, power-hungry preachers and teachers!

For the past forty years we have witnessed a grievous perversion of the fully preached gospel. Many intelligent, Christ-loving believers have been shocked or chagrined by the mockery and misuse of super natural workings by impostors who have set themselves up as figures of faith and power. These liars have turned the fully preached gospel into acts of pride and personal gain.

You see them being blasted on television and in newspapers. You see hucksterism, theatrics, phony healings, unsubstantiated claims, money-grabbing, exaggerations -- all so abominable in God's eyes. It has been one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the church!

Yet, as if these perversions weren't enough, along came the "prosperity gospel," which added to the perversion. Basically, accepting Christ meant "winning the lottery"! It meant having the promise of wealth -- cars, clothes, houses, land. Whatever a believer "spoke into existence" was to become

reality in his life. Even worse, this gospel portrayed Jesus as some wine-guzzling sports fanatic who loves to dote on His "kids"!

The biggest tragedy of all is that these very perversions have caused many God-fearing pastors, evangelists and laypeople to turn away from the truth of a fully preached gospel. They want nothing to do with signs, wonders or miracles.

Yet, beloved, God is still God -- and He is mighty in working miracles and wonders! He is still our healer -- and He wants to show Himself strong on behalf of those who trust in Him! Great supernatural workings took place in the New Testament church without any perversions -- without advertising, showmanship, or any person claiming all the power and authority. The ministry of Paul provides an example:

At Troas, Paul preached such a long message, a young man named Eutychus fell asleep while sitting on a window sill. The boy fell three stories to the ground -- and the Bible says Eutychus "was taken up dead" (see Acts 20:5-12).

When Paul arrived on the scene below, he quieted everyone. Then he did as Elijah had done: He stretched himself out over the dead lad. Suddenly, life came back into Eutychus. The boy had resurrected -- raised from the dead! What a mighty miracle!

Now, after this happened, Paul didn't send everyone out to spread the news that a miracle had taken place. He didn't invite Eutychus to accompany him on his evangelistic journeys and testify of his resurrection. There were no pamphlets urging, "See the boy who fell from a building and died. God raised him from the dead! Hear the preaching of Paul, man of great faith and power!"

No -- that wasn't what happened at all. Instead, everyone simply went back to the third floor, had communion, and Paul continued preaching. Scripture does not even mention Eutychus any further. Why? Because the church expected supernatural works to happen! They preached a full gospel -- with signs and wonders following!

These Mighty Deeds Happened Daily Among The Saints -- and No Person Got the Glory! These great deeds were called "special miracles":

"And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:11-12).

How can a handkerchief or apron get any glory? Paul sent the believers out with such items, and they in turn told others: "The saints have prayed over this garment. If you'll believe God and place it on you, He will heal you." When the people laid these articles on their foreheads, limbs or bodies, they quickly got up from their bed or their begging mat. They were healed!

These "special miracles" became an expected part of the believers' daily lives and worship. They didn't have to attend some huge meeting with fanfare to see them take place. No -- they saw these mighty deeds as a part of their everyday walk with the Lord!

Here is my point: If preaching alone could accomplish God's desires, America would have been won to Christ long ago. Consider what happened in Ephesus, after three months of bold preaching:

"...(certain) were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude..." (verse 9).

Ephesus was a godless, idolatrous city given over to the occult. The population was obsessed with occult books and practices, magic, witchcraft. And after three months of bold preaching by Paul, the people only grew harder.

But then God began to perform special miracles through Paul's hands. Suddenly, the sick were being healed, the lame were given healthy limbs, the blind had their sight restored!

That's when the demonic powers of Ephesus began to get riled up. Seven sons of a priest named Sceva went to a certain man's house to try to cast demons out of him "in the name of the Jesus preached by Paul." But the legion inside this man turned on the seven and attacked them, tearing their clothes and beating them wildly. They ran out for their lives, naked and screaming!

Word spread throughout the whole city: "...and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (verse 17). People exclaimed, "These followers of Jesus have authority over demon powers!"

So Paul held a bonfire on the city square:

"Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver" (verse 19).

Thousands of books on exorcism, magic, occult sciences, charms, witchcraft -- all went up in flames! And it happened because the people of Ephesus had been confronted with a gospel "fully preached" -- with signs, wonders and mighty deeds!

God Envisions a Last-Day Church That Does More Than Preach and Teach! I believe the gospel can't be fully preached unless it is accompanied by the power and demonstration of the holy Ghost -- working mighty wonders, proving the gospel is true!

Paul boldly stated, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4).

The Greek here means, "with proof." Paul was saying, "I preach the gospel with proof. God and the Holy Spirit are backing me up with wonders!"

Indeed, Hebrews 2:4 says God confirmed Paul's message with signs and wonders: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will."

The New Testament believers had one prayer: "...that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:30). These apostles went everywhere fully preaching the gospel:

"...and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:43). "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people...And believers were the more added to the Lord..." (5:12-14). "There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed

every one" (verse 16).

Finally, here is one of the most conclusive of all verses -- proving that a fully preached gospel must include signs and wonders:

"Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts 14:3).

This verse says the apostles ministered boldly for a long time, preaching grace and repentance -- and then God granted "signs and wonders to be done by their hands"!

In contrast, the church today has become weak and ineffective. Why? Because it no longer believes in the supernatural! Theologians tell us that at some point God quit performing mighty deeds. Yet, exactly when all of this supernatural activity stopped, no one can say!

Some claim that miracles ceased when Paul died. Others say it was about A.D. 150. But, I ask you: Who has the audacity to pick the day, week, month or year when God supposedly said, "Enough! For thousands of years I've performed signs, wonders and miracles for those who have believed. But now you have a completed Bible and are more intelligent. So I'm cutting you off! No more miracles -- no more signs or healings!"

Beloved, don't be fooled! There is a great deception behind all of this.

You see, Paul tells us that in the last days Satan will come forth "with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Jesus Himself said, "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect" (Mark 13:22).

Think of it: Demons, false Christs, false prophets -- all seeking to confirm their message with lying signs and wonders! Yet, am I supposed to believe that God will expose His church to such a powerful, wonder-working devil -- but leave us with no mighty weapons or supernatural workings of our own? Will He have a church that says, "Satan can work signs and wonders, but God cannot?" Never! That is absolutely unthinkable!

Rather, the Bible says God's holy remnant church will go "forth and (preach) every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

That is what God envisions for us!

You ask, "But what about all the lying signs and wonders among Satan's hordes?"

I tell you, just as Moses' reed swallowed up Pharaoh's snakes, God's mighty deeds in these last days will swallow up all the devil's dark deeds. Satan's works will appear as nothing compared to God's incredible signs and wonders!

The miracles of this last-day church will be genuine, real, undisputable, undeniable -- and yet they will not be well-known. Instead, they will issue forth from the hands of ordinary, holy, separated saints who know God and are intimate with Jesus.

These believers will emerge from the secret closet of prayer -- a small, prepared army full of faith,

with no other desire than to do the will of God and glorify Him. Without fanfare they will go into hospitals, homes, the streets, and will lay hands on the sick and see incredible miracles of healing. They will be fearless against demons, casting down great principalities and powers. They will be so powerful in prayer, they'll open entire nations for the gospel. And God will confirm His Word by their mighty deeds!"

2. This Last-Day Remnant Church Will Be Comprised of Christians Who Refuse to Live by Bread Alone! If you think you're too ordinary for God to use, listen closely: God is not going to do His last-day work through big-name evangelists or pastors. They alone won't be able to handle the great moving of His Spirit! The fact is, God is going to need every housewife, teenager, elderly person and all who love Him to carry out His mighty work!

This last-day army is going to be made up of Christians who have been weaned from bread alone. Let me explain what I mean:

God said through Moses:

"...man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Jesus Himself quoted this verse when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness to turn stones into bread.

Bread stands for all natural, material things necessary for this life. These include food, shelter, clothes, labor, wages. Bread represents livelihood -- those earthly things we need that are not evil in themselves.

Now, the Lord knows we need all of these things. But multitudes of Christians live only for the things of this life! Their lives are wrapped up in their job, their house, paying the bills. And all their prayers are focused only on their needs -- their hurts, their problems, their desires. They live on bread alone!

Of course, it is honorable to have a job and to provide for your family. That's all a part of obeying the Word of God and living by every word that proceeds out of His mouth. But some Christians never get beyond bread. They spend a lifetime just surviving!

For example -- how many Christian young men and women spend all of their time thinking about their need for a mate? How much of their prayers is focused on asking God to fulfill their loneliness! They are living on bread alone.

How many married couples spend all of their time focused on trials and troubles with their children? This one matter consumes all their thoughts, all their prayers. They are focused on one need -- on bread!

Jesus did teach us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). But first He said we were to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done..." (verse 10). We are to focus first on God's interests -- to pray for His will to be done!

What have you been thinking about more than anything else these past six months? What has consumed most of your time and prayers? Has it been mostly bread issues -- personal needs?

If you focus only on bread, then you have no life! You're living in a wilderness, as the children of Israel did. Each day they arose and began crying for bread. Yet, after God gave it to them, they cried for meat. They continually cried out for their personal needs to be met -- every day for forty years!

Beloved, that is boredom -- drudgery! God never intended that for His children. Instead, He told Israel through Moses, "You should be living by every word that proceeds out of My mouth! Yes, I told you I would give you bread. But don't stop there. Move on! I've told you there's a land ahead flowing with milk and honey, with rivers, trees, forests, green pastures. And I want that place for you!"

If your whole life is centered on survival -- if you're not shut in with Jesus, growing in His Word, preparing your heart as a bride adorned for her Husband -- then you have no life at all! You're bored, unfulfilled! You may come to church and receive a little bit of life here and there. But you are not giving life!

Right now God is raising up a people who are not focused on bread issues. Instead, they are focused on His will for this midnight hour! They are tired of living in a wilderness of mere survival. All they want is to know and do God's will. They are ordinary people who have been weaned from living on bread alone. Their training has come from the Holy Ghost -- in the secret closet of prayer!

Every member of this last-day army must be ready and prepared in heart -- because God is poised to release His great, final outpouring!

Before Jesus came, John the Baptist went forth "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). This was a preaching of repentance -- a call to people to prepare their hearts.

Paul also spoke of being "prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21). And Samuel told Israel that God would do a new thing for them, if they would "prepare (their) hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only" (1 Samuel 7:3). Also, David said, "Lord, thou hast heard the desire [petition] of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear" (Psalm 10:17).

In this last verse, David outlines a simple, three-step plan for knowing the Lord's mind and will for your life:

1. Petition Him (pray).
2. Prepare your heart to hear His voice.
3. He will cause you to know. The Spirit will speak to you!

Very soon, God is going to pour out of His glorious cup the greatest measure of His Spirit the world has ever seen. Great conviction will come upon your neighbors, coworkers and unsaved family members. The Holy Ghost is going to convict of sin, righteousness and judgment!

People everywhere are going to be hurting. And they're going to turn from their dead churches to seek out those who walk with God. They will be desperate to find someone whose heart has been prepared!

Beloved, you are one of those whom God is calling! He is going to use hundreds of thousands of ordinary servants for His end-time work of people-to-people ministry. So, I ask you: Are you preparing

your heart right now for His work to be done, both in you and through you? Or are you just sitting by, enduring a wilderness life?

Confess to God today: "Oh, Lord -- I want my life to count! I know that right now I'm living in a wilderness of despair, on bread alone. But I want to live!"

Dive into His Word. Learn to seek Him daily. There is revolutionary power in the preparation of your heart! It is through this preparation that meaning and fullness come to your life. It changes your feelings, your personality -- and it releases power in you!

When God sees you are ready, He will bring to you great opportunities to do His work. You won't even have to leave your house. God will bring the needs right to your door!

But be warned: If you don't begin to seek Him, the Bible says, you will turn to evil. "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (2 Chronicles 12:14).

We serve a mighty God who at this very hour is preparing His people for a mighty work:

"The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies" (Isaiah 42:13).

So prepare your heart to meet Him. Become a ready servant, equipped and prepared for His great, last-day outpouring. And you will see His glory come alive in you in this final hour!

Hallelujah!

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