

I. Introduction

- a) Revelation 19:7-8
- b) Over a period of 30 years, the Lord has sovereignly established us as a forerunner ministry and church. He has anointed us with the spirit and the power of Elijah to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. We are an end-time ministry and church whose mission is to make the bride of Jesus Christ ready for the Bridegroom.
- c) Today's message will continue to focus on our mission to make the bride ready.
- d) Last week, we looked at the mission the Lord has given us to make the bride, the need for the bride to make herself ready, and what it looks like when the bride is made ready.
- e) This week, as we continue looking at our mission to make the bride ready, we will focus on:
 - The global movement of the Spirit to make the bride ready;
 - How the church's response to this invitation can accelerate when Jesus returns;
 - The urgency of the hour;
 - The reality that Jesus can return in our lifetime;
 - Our specific prophetic invitation into this movement to make the bride ready.

II. The Global Movement of the Spirit to Make the Bride Ready

- a) From July 16-19, 2021, the Lord led mom, dad, Angie, and myself to go to Terry and Josiah Bennett's conference *Ready for the End of Our Time*. This conference was one of the most impactful moments in our lives. I would encourage you to listen to the messages and even read some notes from the conference.¹
- b) Sharing from the Scriptures and also several prophetic experiences, Terry and Josiah communicated the urgent call of the Spirit for the bride to make herself ready.
- c) I will share a summary of the conference in this message because it has profound implications to Restoration Life fulfilling our mission.
- d) Here's my summary of what I believe the Spirit is saying to the church from this conference:

The wedding is ready but the bride is not. Therefore, the Lord is now releasing a vessel of fiery messengers, a corporate John the Baptist, to make the bride ready.

This vessel, comprised of prophetic and apostolic messengers, will be anointed with the spirit and the power of Elijah and they will trigger the bride being made ready.

The Lord has prepared this John-the-Baptist vessel for this very hour and is now commissioning this vessel to go and make the bride ready.

This vessel is the messenger from Malachi 3:1-3 and Malachi 4:5-6, of whom John the Baptist fulfilled in part. But the final fulfillment will be at the end of the age and it will be a global fulfillment.

If this John-the-Baptist vessel responds wholeheartedly and if the bride responds to this call, then the Lord will release a superabundance of grace to accelerate the bride's readiness.

If this happens, the Lord will return much sooner than most people think. This decade, from 2020 to 2030, will go a long way in determining when Jesus returns.

If the messenger vessel called to prepare the bride responds in the right way and *if* the church responds in the right way, then the Lord can return much sooner than most think.

I believe, with all my heart, the Lord can return in my lifetime if these two conditions are met.

That said, now is the time for the church to really wake up to the urgency of the hour, to confront the scoffing and mocking heart of unbelief in the church, and to shake off the doubt and cynicism that has gripped the heart of much of the church regarding the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

He really might return in our lifetime, much sooner than most believe.

Our generation has been divinely invited to be the generation who triggers the second coming of Jesus Christ.

- e) In short, here's my big takeaway: The Father has released a global movement of the Spirit to make the bride ready, to accelerate the Bridegroom's return, and Restoration Life Church has been preparing for this very hour, day, month, and year. We have been prepared for such a time as this.
- f) On 8/13/2021, the Lord spoke this word to me:

I have released and initiated a movement to make the bride ready. This is not coming. It is here.

It is an internal, hidden, but global movement that is forming a mature son in a remnant within the church. And soon, this remnant will grow up and become the mature son I am looking for.

The birthing of this mature, corporate son in a remnant of My people, who have overcome in a real way by experience, will complete the first-fruits harvest and trigger the rest of the bride being made ready.

There is no stopping My movement. I have arisen from My throne and I have released the resources of heaven to see to it that this first-fruits harvest comes to completion.

I want Restoration Life, Lifeschool, and the Forerunner School laser focused on the birth of this mature son in a remnant of My people.

III. Accelerating His Return

- a) Speaking of the Lord's return, 2 Peter 3:12 states, "Wait patiently for the Lord to return and don't do anything out of the ordinary, since we don't know the day nor the hour of His coming. Nor do we have control of when He returns."
- b) Combining the Amplified and Message versions, this verse reads like this:

Wait patiently for the Lord to return and don't be one of those radicals who says Jesus is returning soon. Since no one who has made a prediction about His coming has been right so far, beware of becoming an extremist who constantly says Jesus is returning soon.

Only God knows when Jesus is returning and He has set a specific date based on the 7 days of creation, 1,000 years being like a day, and the Jewish calendar of high holy days, including Passover, the Day of Atonement, and Rosh Hashanah.

Since the date of Jesus' return has already been fixed on God's prophetic calendar, there's nothing we can do to alter that day; therefore, we should live our lives in a normal, balanced, rational way and wait patiently for Jesus to return in God's timing.

- c) Obviously, 2 Peter 3:12 doesn't say that and I just made up the Amplified and Message translation. Instead, 2 Peter 3:11-12 reads like this: "What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, *looking for* and *hastening* the coming of the day of God." Let me take a minute and define what *looking for* and *hastening* really mean.
- d) In the Greek, *looking for* means *to watch toward, to look for, await, expect*.² Luke 3:15 translates it as "a state of expectation."
- e) The word *looking for* is similar to the word translated *be on the alert* or *watch*, which is used 11 times in the context of the end times and the return of the Lord (Matt. 24:42-42; 25:13; Mark 13:34-35,37; Luke 12:37; 1 Thess. 5:6; Rev. 3:2-3; 16:15).
- f) In the Greek, *hastening* means *earnestly desiring; to make haste; to hasten; to speed; to urge on*.³ In other words, the bride is meant to have such an earnest desire for the Bridegroom to return that we literally speed up and accelerate when He comes. Alternatively, if we don't hunger and thirst for Jesus to come back and we grow lukewarm, distracted, and fall asleep, it will delay His return.
- g) Satan knows 2 Peter 3:12 far better than the church and has therefore devised a strategy to delay the Bridegroom's return. He has likely inspired and has definitely used the many failed predictions that Jesus would return on a specific date throughout church history. Using these failed predictions and the excesses of some who "fled to the mountains" waiting for the rapture, he has essentially swung the church to the other side of the pendulum when it comes to looking for Jesus' return with eager expectation and burning desire.
- h) When you throw into the mix the scoffers and mockers within the church, especially prominent leaders who have a distorted view of eschatology, who deride those looking for the Bridegroom to return even though scriptural, you have exactly what we have today in the church. A passive, lukewarm, unexpectant, unbelieving, doubt-filled, cynical church who is not looking for, watching for, desiring, and hastening the return of Jesus Christ.
- i) Sadly, the majority within the church, without even realizing it, have lost the vision and hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- j) 2 Peter 3:12 actually teaches the exact opposite of what many in the church believe about the return of Christ. As we just saw, we are to earnestly desire the Bridegroom's return, and from this earnest desire for our Bridegroom, we are to wake up, look for His return, expect His return, make ourselves ready for His return, and speed up His return.
- k) Honestly, do you eagerly and earnestly desire Jesus' return? Are you making yourself ready for His return? Are you looking for His return in a state of constant expectation?

IV. Come Lord Jesus

- a) In light of our call to look for and hasten His return, it's interesting the Bible concludes with these words:

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." . . . He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (Rev. 22:17-21)
- b) When the church wakes up, makes herself ready, and cries out in union with the indwelling Spirit, "Come, Lord Jesus," then Jesus will return.

- c) This must be far more than a song we sing once. Or a prayer we pray a few times. It must be a lifestyle of readiness within a remnant in the church. "Come, Lord Jesus" is merely the exclamation point of a lifestyle fully given to making ourselves ready for the Bridegroom.
- d) Let it sink in once more—the Bible ends with the bride of Christ, in union with the indwelling Spirit, crying out to Jesus, "Come." The Bible ends like this and this age will also end in the same way. A passionate bride, who has made herself ready for the Bridegroom, will cry out to Him, "Come" and He will return.

V. The Restrainer

- a) Talking about the second coming of Christ, Paul told the Thessalonians,

Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him [the antichrist] now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming. (2 Thess. 2:5-8, emphasis mine)

- b) Let me summarize this passage. In essence, Paul is telling us that the devil eagerly wants to establish the antichrist's reign in the earth. However, the Lord is actively restraining this from happening. Even though lawlessness and the spirit of antichrist is actively at work in the earth, it is being restrained from being released in fullness until God's timing. What, exactly, is the Lord waiting on before He removes His restraint?
- c) To answer this question, we need to drill into 2 Thessalonians 2:7, which states, "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way."
- d) New Testament scholar Craig Keener says there are over 30 different interpretations of this verse. Those who believe in a pretribulation rapture say the restrainer is the Holy Spirit who will be removed whenever the church is raptured to heaven. Others have said the restrainer is the archangel Michael, who is restraining the devil until God's timing. Others claim the restrainer is a nation, such as America, who is restraining evil until the Lord's fixed date.
- e) I don't think we can be dogmatic about this verse because it's not totally clear what Paul is saying. However, if we dig into the Greek, I think it becomes clearer. Here's how the verse reads if we translate it straight from the Greek:

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work but is now restrained until finished out of the middle.

- f) Focus on the phrase *finished out of the middle*.
- g) The phrase *finished* can mean *to become, to be fulfilled, or to come into existence*.⁴ In the context of the end times, where Scripture repeatedly stresses the necessity of watching and being ready, *finished* could possibly refer to readiness—the *readiness of the bride*.
- h) What Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:6 could very well be what he means in 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Namely, "We are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete."
- i) The phrase *out of the middle* can mean *from among or from the midst of*.⁵ In other words, it could imply a remnant—*possibly a remnant within the church*.
- j) Putting these two thoughts together, this verse could mean evil is being restrained until a remnant within the church has made themselves ready. Until a remnant within the church has made their obedience to the Lord complete.

VI. Evil Restrained Until the Bride Is Ready

- a) In my opinion, this interpretation—that evil is being restrained until a remnant within the church has made themselves ready—fits well with Revelation 12-14.
- b) Without getting into all the complexities of this passage, I will summarize it here, also using what Jesus taught in the parable of the wheat and the tares:

The end-time harvest is far greater than millions of souls being saved in the context of signs, wonders, and miracles. The end-time harvest is about the greatest number of people in church history making themselves ready as the bride of Christ and becoming mature sons of God.

Just as in a natural harvest there is a first-fruits harvest (a relatively small ingathering) and a final ingathering (a much larger ingathering), there will be a first-fruits harvest of a remnant who have made themselves ready and then a final harvest of many who have made themselves ready.

The first-fruits harvest, underway since Genesis and spanning throughout history, will be completed 3.5 years before Jesus returns. This is triggered by the birth of the mature, corporate son—a remnant within the church who have made themselves ready before the majority (Rev. 12:5; 14:1-5). This is synonymous with a remnant in the church making themselves ready as a bride for her Bridegroom.

This birth of a mature, corporate son—a remnant within the church who have made themselves ready—will trigger the casting down of Satan and his angels from the second heaven to the earth. This will also trigger the start of the Great Tribulation, when the antichrist is revealed and his 42-month reign commences.

- c) Therefore, putting together 2 Thessalonians 2:7, Revelation 12-14, and 2 Corinthians 10:6, a very plausible interpretation of 2 Thessalonians 2:7 emerges. This is what I believe is the interpretation:

The Lord is restraining the full release of evil until a remnant within the church makes themselves ready. Readiness of the bride, therefore, removes the restraint of evil and triggers the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Conversely, a lack of readiness within a remnant of the church can also delay the Lord's return. This means the Lord will continue to restrain evil until a remnant within the church have made themselves ready.

VII. In Summary . . .

- a) No matter how dark it gets, Jesus is not returning until the bride has made herself ready.
- b) Readiness of the bride determines when Jesus returns. Not a specific, predetermined date on God's prophetic calendar.
- c) Evil has been restrained and will be restrained until a remnant within the church make themselves ready as a bride for the Bridegroom.
- d) The bride is made ready in three phases:
 1. Forerunners = Make themselves ready before the majority and are used to make others ready.
 2. First-Fruits Harvest = Has been underway since Genesis but is soon to be completed. See Revelation 12:1-5; 14:1-5. Triggers the Great Tribulation (last 3.5 years of the age).

3. Final Harvest = During the Great Tribulation (last 3.5 years of the age). The bride made ready by the fires of tribulation, persecution, and suffering.
- e) The Lord has initiated a global movement to make the bride ready and has now commissioned and released forerunners for this very purpose.

VIII. Our Prophetic Invitation into This Movement

- a) During these past 30 years, the Lord has prepared us for this very hour, day, month, and year.
- b) We have been in preparation for this global movement the Lord has initiated to make the bride ready.
- c) Think about this. Jesus started His ministry when he was around 30. John the Baptist also started His ministry when he was around 30. Restoration Life has been in a wilderness for 30 years preparing to be a John the Baptist who prepares the bride for the Bridegroom. And though the Lord has most definitely used us powerfully during these past 30 years, especially through Lifeschool where we have trained and equipped over 5,000 senior pastors and over 250,000 people, in some ways we're just getting started.
- d) My point is 30 years has profound prophetic significance.
- e) So, what I am about to tell you, you simply can't make up. The Lord definitely prompted dad, mom, Angie, and I to go to Terry and Josiah's conference. This conference was the weekend before we celebrated our 30-year anniversary as a church. Little did we know this conference would basically be the core message we have preached for the past 25 years. And little did we know that Terry had several prophetic experiences, where it became clear the Lord was raising up a John-the-Baptist vessel who would make the bride ready. This is a movement the Lord is now initiating—an end-time movement for which the Lord has been preparing us for 30 years.
- f) We don't need confirmation to know that Restoration Life is part of this movement, for we have been preparing for this for 30 years. However, without going into all the details, through prophetic words given publicly at the conference and prophetic words given in private conversations, it is clear the Lord has *called us by name* to be part of this global movement to make the bride ready.
- g) The timing of this is incredible. If this would have happened at the beginning of the year, it would still be pretty amazing. But given that all of this happened the very week before we celebrated our 30-year anniversary was dramatic confirmation. The timing of it alone is utterly profound.
- h) It also tells me Restoration Life is now ready to be released from the wilderness to make the bride ready in this community, in this nation, and in the nations. The word Noel gave us many years ago, from Luke 1:80, that we would stay in the wildness until the time of our public appearing, is now coming to pass. We have been prepared for "such a time as this."
- i) I will close with what the Lord spoke to me on 8/13/2021:

Let your ministry—what you do—serve this mission and movement [making the bride ready]. Align your ministry with this one singular movement. A laser-focused movement that will make My bride ready.

Your success is not measured by how many go to your church, do Lifeschool, or do the Forerunner School. It is measured by did you help to trigger the birth of the mature, corporate son in a remnant of My people.

I am coming—ready or not—I am coming!

- j) I say, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX4GQg8pK9r0LY1PK2rK-9g/videos>

https://thectp.s3.amazonaws.com/forerunner/Notes/TheBlueprint/ReadyForTheEndTimes_Session1_Ken.pdf

https://thectp.s3.amazonaws.com/forerunner/Notes/TheBlueprint/ReadyForTheEndTimes_Session1_Sue.pdf

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https://thectp.s3.amazonaws.com/forerunner/Notes/TheBlueprint/ReadyForTheEndTimes_Session3_Sue.pdf

² <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4328/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>, referenced on 8/12/2021.

³ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4692/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>, referenced on 8/12/2021.

⁴ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1096/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>, referenced on 8/13/2021.

⁵ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3319/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>, referenced on 8/13/2021.