

I. Setting the Context

A. Zephaniah 1:14-16

The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities; And against the high towers.

1. This passage emphasizes to us the severity and trouble of the end times. Jesus said this would be a time of great tribulation unlike any other time in redemptive history. He tells us that it would be the most troubling time the world has ever known (**Matt 24:21-22, 4-24**). However, he also tells us that there will be no greater time in which the gospel is proclaimed in its power across the globe (**Matt 24:14**) and that during this time it would produce a mature and prepared Bride (The Church) who has come into a full revelation of Jesus the Bridegroom God filled with desire. That the church would declare together in the most troubling hour **“the bridegroom is coming” (Matt 25:1-6)**.

B. Haggai 2:6-7: *“For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; ‘and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts.*

1. In the last days the lord will shake the earth (disaster) and the nations (political, economic, military crisis. We can hear that and keep it at arm’s length without actually wrestling with it, but what about when the shaking comes to our families, our relationships, our city, or our church (**Matt 24:10**: *“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another”*). One of the premier issues of the end times is actually offense; that we would not be offended at the Lord’s sovereign leadership in that hour, that our hearts would

remain tender before God and before others (**Phil 1:9-11**). The good news is that the Lord will manifest His glory amidst His people in that hour like never before. We are approaching the most exciting time to be alive. Times of great injustice which the Prophet Daniel called “the fullness of sin” (**Dan 8:23**), but Jesus will return as king to make every wrong thing right, to break the wicked nations like a piece of pottery and to lead His people in tender mercy. (**Ps 2, 98; Rev 11:15**).

II. An invitation to participate

A. Jesus prayed to the father that we would be *“with Him where He is”* (**John 17:24**). In part that means being involved in what He is doing. Part of the Lord’s great mercy strategy at the end of the age is to raise up **forerunners**, prophetic messengers to declare the beauty of Jesus as Bridegroom, King and Judge. The God who is sovereign and all-powerful to accomplish His purpose actually wants you involved. This is because God as a Father confers privilege to His Sons and Daughters. Jesus as a bridegroom wants us involved sharing the burden and the joy of His heart in what He does. This is partnership.

1. *“Jesus is not just a King with power, He is a Bridegroom with desire.” –*

Mike Bickle

2. In the administration of His kingdom *“God does 90% allows and empowers us to do 10% and then says WE did it” – Mike Bickle*

B. **Malachi 4:5-6**: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*

1. **Luke 1:17**: *“He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”*

C. **Isaiah 40:3**: *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

1. **John 1:19-23**: *Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent*

priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," as the prophet Isaiah said."

D. God said He would restore the spirit and ministry that was upon the Prophet Elijah to the earth in the last days. Specifically, the ministry of Elijah in prevailing prayer, confronting the spirit of Idolatry, and anointing the next generation to move in mighty signs and wonders. John the Baptist was a partial fulfillment of this the generation of the Lord's first coming, but this Prophecy of Scripture finds its fullest expression in the generation of the Lord's return. As John the Baptist prepared the way of the first coming God is raising up forerunners to prepare the earth for the unveiling of Christ at His return.

III. Elijah and Elisha prefigured John and Jesus

A. There is a prefiguring in their names. Elijah means "God is the Lord." Even as Elijah was a Prophet who confronted idolatry by telling the people to stop wavering between two opinions (serving the Lord or Baal) John the Baptist exhorted the nation to "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Elisha means "God is Salvation," this is a type and shadow of Christ as savior.

B. Elijah, with a prophetic spirit, confronted idolatry in the land, called the nation to repentance and won the victory "in the air" through a life of prevailing prayer and fasting. He gathered the stones together to build an altar for God to send down fire in His midst and in His generation (**1 Kings 18**). This prefigures John. Elisha moved in a healing ministry of signs and wonders. He fed 100 men supernaturally (**2 Kings 4**), he raised a woman's dead son (**2 Kings 4**), and he healed a leper (**2 Kings 5**). Sound familiar?

IV. A Forerunner Generation

A. God is raising up Forerunners. These are prophetic messengers who receive revelation of what God is doing a moment before it is seen in masse by the people of God. Forerunners will proclaim Christ's soon return and will emphasize His identity as Bridegroom in how He feels about His Church. They will proclaim what He is coming to do, and they will proclaim who He is. (**Amos 3:7-8, Matt 3:11, John 3:29**).

B. There is crisis of confusion in the church today related to understanding the end times. The ability "prepare the way of the Lord" or to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" is being drowned in a sea of opinions in the Church or just a plain disinterest in the Day of the Lord among some. God will raise up forerunners understand clearly the details surrounding the Lord's return. These messengers will teach clearly with a spirit of revelation on them that cuts right past the fog and gives clarity to a generation about the days ahead. (**Daniel 11:32-35**).

C. They will declare God as Father to a fatherless generation and they will anoint a company of sons and daughters as revivalists to possess their inheritance. (**Mal 4:5-6, Acts 2:17-18**). Elijah was told by the Lord after hearing the still small voice to do 3 things: to anoint a young prophet to succeed him and to anoint the next two kings of Israel. He went on only to appoint Elisha and Elisha went on to accomplish the rest of what God assigned to Elisha.

D. These forerunners will be given to prevailing prayer and fasting that confirms a gospel fervor to the ends of the earth confirmed by signs and wonders like no other time in history. (**Matt 9:15, 38, 24:14, Acts 2:17-18**)

E. God is raising up forerunners to throw fuel on the fire of a global prayer and worship movement that will fill the earth before the Lord returns. God will raise up day and night prayer with worship in the cities of the earth as a witness to the glory of God and the worth of Christ, and the redeemed from coastland to coastland in every nation and people of the earth will sing together "the spirit and the bride say come Lord Jesus." (**Luke 18:7-8, Isa 62:6-7, Rev 4:8, Isa 42:10-13, Isa 24:14-16, Mal 1:11, Rev 22:17**)