

Attributes of Third Heaven Visitation

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As we have pointed out in numerous writings, **we believe this generation is on the threshold of experiencing a spiritual restoration that will equate in its prominence with the recovery of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.** The Scriptures referring to this day and the various signs of the times explicitly point to this reality.

Isaiah foresaw the natural and spiritual restoration and announced:

“Thus says the LORD, 'In a favorable time I have answered you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you; and I will keep you and give you for a covenant of the people, to restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages; Saying to those who are bound, 'Go forth,' to those who are in darkness, Show yourselves.' Along the roads they will feed, and their pasture will be on all bare heights. They will not hunger or thirst, nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; for He who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them to springs of water.

Isaiah 49:8-10

The apostolic reformation will ignite the reestablishment of the Church to function in genuine spiritual power and authority. From that identity, even greater places in God await. These will include the unfolding of the Melchizedek Priesthood and the appropriate Biblical apprehension of sonship through “overcomers” who have discovered rest in God and His rest in them. The writer of Hebrews emphasized this, writing:

For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:8-9)

The apostle Paul was entrusted with notable understanding involving the strategy of the Holy Spirit in leading the Church. His epistles clearly outline the many offices established in God's government along with various gifts and the impartation of visions and revelations. He likewise demonstrated powerful teachings that came by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and affirmed the messages with power. All of this, and more, will be fully operating in the days ahead.

Many saints will be given the opportunity to experience God in ways articulated by Paul, John and the notable patriarchs of old. The Biblical prophecies pointing to the end-time generation highlight a people who will be anointed with the Holy Spirit, to witness numerous things through visions, dreams and spiritual encounters. Many will also be taken into the Third Heaven, and like Paul, experience realms in God impossible to communicate. The Lord is introducing Himself in a fresh and profound way.

Revelation of His Attributes

One of the most captivating principles in walking with God is the revelation of His many glorious attributes. It has always been fascinating to discover through the Scriptures, the diverse reactions of the Lord's servants when He manifested Himself to them.

For instance, following the Lord's death, burial and resurrection, He appeared to His bewildered disciples as a loving Friend. Luke 24 highlights this wonderful encounter. The disciples were gathered in an upper room behind closed doors, as two excited disciples shared their supernatural encounter on the road to Emmaus.

While these things were being shared, the Lord Himself stepped into their midst with a salutation of peace and friendship. Very quickly, their startled reaction turned to joy as he encouraged them saying,

Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. (Luke 24: 38-39)

One can only speculate at the sheer elation that must have surged through each disciple, as they were warmly invited to embrace the resurrected Christ. This loving revelation of His attribute as the Friend and Master galvanized the hearts of His disciples with an eternal bond of affection and loyalty. The Lord demonstrated His ability to appear in such a way that His followers are not overwhelmed by the sheer power of His presence. This revelation of Him as Friend disclosed one attribute of His great character and forever altered His disciples.

On the other hand, the beloved disciple John, the very one who once laid his head upon the breast of God, also encountered this same Christ, but with the revelation of a different portion of His attributes. In Revelations 1, we discover the Lord Jesus manifesting Himself to John as the Great Judge.

Falling at His Feet Like a Dead Man

So overwhelming was this experience that when John saw the Lord he, “**fell at His feet like a dead man.**” **That was the reaction of the aged apostle when beholding the revelation of Jesus as the Just Judge.** The same Person... only different manifestations of His attributes, which produced an entirely different response.

This same pattern can be discovered throughout Scripture. The celebrated prophet Moses was able to establish a face-to-face relationship with the Lord and spoke with Him as a friend speaks to his friend. I cannot think of a more extravagant honor conferred to any man. Even so, the Lord further introduced Himself before Israel in such virtue and overwhelming demonstrations of His creative power, that it placed even the heart of Moses in great fear.

The purpose for drawing this conclusion is to discover that the reaction is varied but always powerful and awe-inspiring. In this day, we are being offered an open door to the realm of the Spirit that is truly exceptional in its excellence. Moreover, it is one that must be administered with solemn care and reverence.

The Lord is showing us that His people must learn to discern His true voice, as never before. Likewise, a clear distinction must be developed in our maturity to rightly appropriate the proper level of authority and dimension of our spiritual experiences. Clearly, the Lord desires to touch and embrace His people. **Nevertheless, we should be careful not to call things “Throne Room” revelations and visitations that are not from that lofty place. Our directive is to guard, through the Holy Spirit, the great treasure entrusted to us. We cannot afford to devalue our spiritual currency at this crucial stage, nor abort or even delay this marvelous opportunity.**

Unprecedented Opportunities

We are living in a day unprecedented in history. Great and divine opportunities are imminently before us as many mysteries of the Kingdom are beginning to unfold. The prophet Daniel foresaw this day and was instructed to seal the revelation of his vision for, “**the time of the end.**” (see Daniel 7 & 12) We are living in that day and the seal is being lifted from the revelation of end-time promises.

One of the most notable opportunities being given to His Church is the “open door” presented in Revelations:

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” (Revelation 4:1)

A body of righteous believers is being given the invitation to “come up here” that He might disclose things that will be taking place in this generation. There are many within the Church who are earnestly calling upon the Lord, corporately and individually, that:

He will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know. (Jeremiah 33:3)

A careful examination of the language in this passage discloses that it is referring to truth hidden and wisely set apart for a specific time in the scheme of God. **As we “call” He will “show.”** This is a divine invitation that cannot be approached carelessly, presumptuously or flippantly. It is a sacred and holy mandate that must be addressed with

the greatest reverence and awe.

It is essential that we are equipped with the discernment and maturity to recognize a forged imitation presented with the intent to deceive. The manna reserved for this day to unfold the Kingdom of Heaven is of priceless value. The one whose misguided desire to “**be like the Most High,**” will attempt, with keen earnest, to keep us from it by appealing to the imagination and wounds of the people in the arena of the soul.

It is our devoted pursuit to encounter God in this dimension by responding to this incredible opportunity. On a personal level, that has been my daily prayer for over 14 years. That one revelation transformed my life in 1989, when I discovered that door of opportunity. It was overwhelming to me, and remains so today, to think that the Creator of the universe would give me, or any man, an invitation and opportunity to encounter Him in a face-to-face exchange. Even so, we want truth and the fruit of genuine Third Heaven encounters, which are grounded in the Scriptures, bearing the seal and endorsement of God.

Our Warning

No doubt history will support that **our adversary will attempt to propel this reality beyond its prescribed Biblical parameters.** That has been his modus operandi over the centuries. The faithful stewardship of this great responsibility falls upon those who are pursuing this dimension in God.

Both the Scriptures and Church history provide illuminating attributes and fruit generated when encountering the Lord in such an awesome way. This will help us to judge the authenticity of a true Third Heaven experience and separate it from the excessive and fanatical.

One of the most often quoted passages in Scripture involves the righteous prophet Isaiah and his opportunity to ascend to the Third Heaven and encounter God in a "Throne Room" experience. He records:

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. (Isaiah 6:1)

His response to such an experience is quite revealing:

Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." (Isaiah 6:5)

Because of his humility, an atoning provision was offered providing the cleansing he needed to stand in this place.

Much is written about this notable prophet and his standard of righteousness and commitment to the God of Israel. Both the Scriptures and history record his stand against the apostasy and infidelity of God's covenant people. In fact, it is commonly believed that position of purity to the truth cost him his life. It is believed and recorded in the Apocrypha, that he was sewn asunder because he refused to compromise.

By no means do we suggest that access is granted to this Heavenly domain by virtue of any works or merits of our own. Rather, it is by the grace of God and our willingness to yield to the consecrating work of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, such an opportunity is not approached carelessly. It requires devoted stewardship. There are many who are pursuing this worthy goal in corporate meetings. Nonetheless, our counsel is to be observant that the genuine does not get lost in the counterfeit. The judicious administration of this aspect in Him will require governmental oversight from those anointed with the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation.

The evidence and fruit of Isaiah's experience is vividly portrayed in this Biblical account. No doubt, Isaiah had been given the privilege of seeing numerous visions and revelations of the Lord in his office as prophet. **He was functioning in his prophetic calling long before his visit to the Throne of Heaven. Even so, the power and unveiling of God in this experience left Isaiah, according to his own words, undone and ruined.** It no doubt left an indelible mark on his life and character.

Equipping Warriors

Our national military has now developed sophisticated high-tech weaponry that is “off-the-charts” in its versatility and effectiveness. That is a natural indication of a spiritual reality. What an incredible waste it would be, of both manpower and armament, if our armed forces took a rookie, fresh out of boot camp and outfitted him with these weapons and sent him to the front line. Most likely, he would be killed and the valuable weapons lost.

So is it in the Lord's Kingdom. There is a place of growth and maturity required to be entrusted with “advanced weaponry” so the warrior would not be killed or the weapons lost. With mass media and all the varied and simple means at our disposal to “approach the front-lines,” it would be virtually effortless for people with developing gifts to engage the enemy in a realm beyond their maturity and scope of authority.

The Lord loves us and has plans for our welfare and not our calamity or demise. He has provided imperative equipping ministries that afford a place to develop in our gifts and callings and discover the Lord's weapons and how to use them prolifically and where our zeal is tempered with wisdom. The Lord's governmental design will provide:

**“for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”
(Ephesians 4:12)**

The term “equipping” in this passage is “katartismos,” denoting- to make fit and implying a process leading to consummation...a fitting or preparing fully and perfecting; to be fully furnished. This expression emphasizes a work to be taken to its completion, without leaving that place until fully furnished.

In this stage of our development, we also discover His intimacy and fellowship as we cultivate exchange with Him and learn to hear His Voice—then another we will not follow. Truthfully, this is a wonderful place that should not be hurriedly departed. It would be like Paul and Barnabas, who while praying and ministering to the Lord, were set apart by the Holy Spirit and SENT. Then it is the Lord's bidding and He will cover and protect His purpose.

In The Spirit

Presently, there are many in the Church who are oppressed with feelings of hopelessness, fear, doubt and other burdensome influences exploited by the enemy. It is the purpose and desire of the Holy Spirit to carry believers above this realm, into the Spirit, where our blessings and provisions are discovered in Christ. In this place we embrace hope to displace hopelessness and fear is overcome by faith.

This truth is evidenced in both the Old and New Testament. On one occasion, the prophet Elisha boldly encountered the Army's of the king of Aram. Conversely, his servant was battling issues of fear and doubt. That is, until he was carried above that realm to discover the more accurate spiritual perspective. God's governmental leader helped the lad above the soulish realm of fear and doubt by saying:

"Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them. Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (II Kings 6:16-17)

When the prophet prayed for his servant, the impartation of the anointing allowed the servant access to the realm of faith and supernatural vision. As a result, he was changed and his perspective radically transformed. The deceptive view he previously held is the only one our adversary wants us to comprehend. When we walk by the Spirit, we will not carry out the deeds of the fallen nature. The experience produced genuine and evident change in the servant. His life was radically affected.

The Example of Maria Woodworth-Etter

Visions and revelations seemed to be an integral part of the ministry of Maria Woodworth-Etter. This realm of the

Holy Spirit was experienced by those who were saved and others who attended the meetings to ridicule and mock her ministry. It is well-documented that many saints who were bound by various forms of oppression and sickness were delivered through their supernatural encounter with the Heavenly realm during these meetings.

In each meeting in which this dimension was opened, a reverential awe permeated the auditorium and forever changed each one it touched. Lifelong commitments to the Lord were made by many individuals who discovered that "open door" in her meetings. It is reported that some actually received the gift of speaking other languages and commissioned as missionaries to the nations.

Woodworth-Etter reported that prophetic utterances were given to young and old alike concerning future events, many of which took place within days or weeks of the experience. Others returned with supernatural knowledge and insight that they had no way of knowing within themselves. In each case, the people were captured by the humility and contrition demonstrated by those given this great opportunity to encounter God in this spiritual arena. There was no boasting or superficial behavior, only reverence, contrition and commitments to lives of consecration. Even so, great joy also characterized her life and ministry.

In one particular meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, the people of the city were particularly harsh in their treatment of this precious sister and her ministry team. The meetings were attended by some of the most hardened characters in the city. Woodworth-Etter wrote, "***men stood on the seats with hats on, cigars and pipes in their mouths, coats off and sleeves rolled up... women wore dirty aprons... and bare armed... they would shoot off firecrackers and when we sang they sang even louder and when we prayed they clapped their hands and cheered. They carry pistols and clubs and were ready to kill us and tear down the tent.***"

The end of the story is quite different. The Lord faithfully heard the prayer of His devoted saints and responded by opening the Heavens and giving the people visions of Heaven and hell. They encountered the spiritual dimension opened to them by the Holy Spirit. The results were, according to Woodworth-Etter, "***the fear of God came upon the multitude. The sweat came on their faces and they stood as though in a trance; men began to take their pipes out of their mouths and their hats off. The women began to cover their bare necks and arms with aprons. They felt they stood naked and guilty before God. They began to get off the seats (from standing) and sit down but some fell and lay like dead.***"

The evidence of a tangible touch from the "Third Heaven" was evident and easily discerned. This was true both for those who were saved and those who were not. The fruit was apparent by the responses of the people. It is often recorded in Woodworth-Etter's writings that sinners and saints alike, would often cry out in reverential fear when the Heavenly dimension was opened to them.

Conclusion

A phenomenal opportunity to encounter and embrace God, is being given to the Church of this day and it is one that must be welcomed and protected. It is our heart and ambition to encourage every believer to pursue this reality in God. Nonetheless, at the same time we must also emphasize the importance of discerning the fruit of His voice so that we would not be deceived by another nor would we identify something from that sacred realm that it is merely an expression of our imagination.

On one notable occasion the prophet Samuel stood before the people of Israel as a credible voice and representation of God. His words did not fall to the ground nor did he beg from the people for his bread and sustenance. When he shared his revelations, the people listened attentively to the validity of His voice because he had cultivated a genuine exchange with God. That is the position we as the church must maintain in this crucial hour. It is time for the prophetic ministry in the Church to emerge with a credible and trustworthy voice to address the notable issues presently unfolding.