

BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE – Part XI

His Revelatory Word (b)



It is rare that we start a new year with the same subject matter as the year before, but when we are discussing the subject of building God's house and the subtopic of His revelatory word within the context of that house, we could, in theory, go on forever! One of the most joyful experiences that believers in Jesus Christ have is to discover that He actually wants to commune with you. (See Matthew 18:20; John 10:5, 27; John 14:11-14, 20-27.) It is a joy to know His voice and a passion that ensues in order to maintain that relationship so we can keep in communication with Him. (John

10:27) Part of that relationship is doing what He says. It sort of comes as a shock when you first start listening to what the Holy Spirit teaches you that you realize your little world and His world are totally different. He thinks differently and behaves differently (Isaiah 55:8, 9). This is what makes Christians, of all nationalities and tribes, and to some extent Jews so different. It is the Lord that they serve that is so different. I have gone over this so many times in past articles that I will not cover it again, but there is such a misconception among Jews that Christians serve three gods. Nothing could be further from the truth. It becomes very difficult for others to know that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are One. They wonder how it is that three could be One. It is a valid question and we have covered it many times in articles that are archived here on this site. The point I'm trying to make is that He is so very different from our concept of "God" that sometimes we miss what He is trying to say. Such was the case in the Old Testament when He spoke to so many different people groups, but primarily to the Jews. From the first sentence of "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is One"---and the word for God is plural, to the four hundred silent years after the completion of the book of Malachi in which man recorded no words that He spoke, although God spoke volumes by His supposed silence! This God is totally different than any other. Once you start having a relationship you realize that your reality and His are on a different plane altogether and that what He is saying to you is an attempt to move you into His reality.

It's not easy for us as humans. This example might sound silly, but it is a good one to portray what I am trying to say. I was 21 when I rededicated my life to the Lord after a seven year hiatus of teenage foolery. During that time I knew He was there, but kind of just tried to ignore it. Finally I realized my error and turned back to Him. I was instantly filled with the Holy Spirit as soon as I came up out of the baptismal tank over 26 years ago and never looked back, only going forward with Jesus. Right after this experience I met a nice girl in the church and we became friends. She had a little girl from a previous marriage. She was quite a proper young woman, always dressing to the nines, if you know what I mean. She, her house and her daughter were always immaculate. In fact, I almost thought she woke up that way each day. She was Cuban, but spoke such a flawless Spanish that even other Latin Americans we knew always commented on her beautiful dialect. I, on the other hand, was a little more laid back. While I worked as a court stenographer, and had to go to work dressed professionally, when I came home I liked to relax, take off the make-up and wear jeans. That meant if I could go to church dressing nicely, but give my face a break with no make-up I would, since I had to put it on during the week. We went to an AG church with no dress code (thank God), although our pastor was no typical AG minister. This man loved the word of God and expected miracles. Trust me when I say there was an anointing around him that you just knew he walked with angels. On most Sundays we

would hear a prophecy from the congregation. Once a month the elders would gather and anoint the sick with oil while we worshipped. We always saw answers to prayer. In fact on one such Sunday the power of God hit me so hard I almost hit the floor. Instantly I was healed of a back injury I sustained in a car accident. Every Friday night this pastor would disciple those of us who would come to hear him teach us the word and way of God. To say it was wonderful would be an understatement. My husband and I would sit for hours just to hear his experiences and listen to him teach the word of God. Quite often he came to our shop (which we also happened to live over) to talk to my husband and have the church vehicles fixed.

The shop (and as such our home) was on a main thoroughfare into New York City. It was quite a busy road. My friend, the Cuban girl came to visit me one day after I had gotten home from a job transcribing a court proceeding in an attorney's office. I was quite tired and took off the make-up and threw on a pair of jeans along with one of those long-john types of shirt tops with flowers on it. Not the most glamorous of outfits, but I was totally covered from head to toe---and totally comfortable. I hadn't planned on leaving the house when my husband called me on the phone telling me my friend was outside but couldn't come upstairs, could I come down. I said sure and ran downstairs and outside to see what she needed. I think I passed some customers on the way out (possibly even the pastor) and went out to see what she was up to. To this

day I honestly don't remember what it was she wanted but it didn't take long for her to tell me what she thought of my attire. She basically ripped into me for coming out in public dressed in what she thought was horrible. I had known her for sometime at this point but had never seen this side of her. This was the first time I realized that Christians could be mean to each other. Up until this point that thought had never occurred to me! Since we had the same Lord, and He spoke to us individually as well as a congregation, it just never occurred to me that we could act like anything other than Jesus. Well, in utopia and a perfect world that would be true, but the Lord was using this situation to test me and gently take the rose-colored glasses off that I had been wearing. Remember that His ways are not our ways.

To say that I was stunned by her behavior would not describe it totally. I stood there explaining to her, to no effect, why I wasn't dressed perfectly, all the time wondering what exactly was wrong with what I had on and what exactly was her real problem. I walked away shaking my head in somewhat disbelief at the stranger who was in the body of my friend. As I went up the stairs to my house, I said to the Lord, in a somewhat self-righteous attitude, "Lord, did you hear what she said to me?" He said, "I don't care what she said to you." I was stunned and shocked. Here was this woman who was supposed to hear from God, a Christian, acting like a jerk and being a very bad witness with even a worse attitude and, I thought, 'You don't care'? As that thought

was passing through my mind the Lord continued, "I'm more concerned with what your response is." For those of you that hear from the Lord you know what it is to have that moment in time when the revelation of the Holy Spirit hits you like a ton of bricks and you start to begin to get what it is God is really after.

Little did I know that the next 25 years would see me ministering to people who would profess Christ but be, shall we say, less than Christ-acting? Little did I know that the Holy Spirit would want me to share the words of God directly to many holy-looking ministers that might be, shall we say, less than holy? Areas of self-righteousness in my own life would need to be addressed. I would need to understand God's reality of perfect holiness while He spoke to humans with little or no understanding of His holiness, including me. Little did I know that the next 25 years would see me ministering the love of Christ to people that, in the natural, I definitely did not love. My reality of love would have to be transposed, transfixed and transformed by His reality of love. Those two little sentences also made me realize the profound love and desire that God had for me that He was concerned with my own attitude, wanted me to be concerned by that attitude and wanted me to understand my responses. Little did I know that the next 25 years would see quite a lot of rejection from people who professed to want to hear the word of the Lord, but would rather shoot the messenger; namely, me! I would have to become a whole lot more balanced in Christ

and transfixed in His security in order to weather and flourish during that rejection, all the while maintaining the love of Jesus.

That is not something we can do as humans. It takes an awesome God to talk to us daily, while His awesome Holy Spirit changes us into the likeness of Christ. We need to be willing. Everyone says that they want to hear from God but very few want their world of reality to change in order to step into His reality, His way, His truth and His light. One thought that can make it easier for us to understand the Lord when He speaks to us is that He is speaking from eternity to eternity with an eternal purpose and plan. My response to an insult would show whether I was seeing eternally or with only my daily needs in mind. The solutions to our worldly problems really have eternal answers in Jesus Christ, if we will but wait on Him and study His ways set out in both the Old and New Testaments. This is what sets Christ apart from all others---eternity. He is the only one that makes the claim of Messiah and sets out an eternal plan that deals with the sin issue, the devil and how we live our lives here on earth, basically addressing what kind of people we will be and how we should care for our planet and each other. What makes Christians so different is the word of the Lord that speaks for eternity. We are here on this planet to speak His word and steward His glory. This was basically Lucifer's job before he fell. As the anointed cherub that guarded the glory and as the worship leader in heaven (Ezekiel 28:13-19) he got to hear God speak in glory and in some form steward or guard the

glory. When sin was found in him and the Lord drove him out, a void was made. God's creation of Adam and Eve filled the vacancy. Satan absolutely hates the fact that we not only have his former job, but that the Word from eternity was made flesh in Jesus Christ and His word resides in us through the precious Holy Spirit. We now have a relationship and proximity to God that he will never have. He has done everything in his power since his fall to drive mankind away from God. Who knows better the Lord's inability to reside with sin than the one who tried to bring sin to heaven? The enemy's effort is to stop mankind from fulfilling God's eternal plan of our co-habitation with God, thus ending satan's false reign here on earth. He does this through false religion, no religion or true religion gone amok (think Spanish Inquisition). This is why it is so crucial for us to be able to communicate with our Lord within a system of checks and balances as set up by the Lord within the confines of the Old and New Testaments.

If you will review last month's article you will be able to read these checks and balances or guidelines set up by the Lord. Most of them deal with our internal environment. God usually deals with us and our own issues first before He allows us to speak for Him in any capacity. And that falls in line with His eternal plan. Remember that Revelation 22:14-16 mentions that nothing false will be in heaven. Well, to look at us now we kind of don't make the cut. But it is the eternal purpose of Christ's blood to cleanse us of our sin. He does and it does

when we accept Him. But as we live everyday on this planet we need a reality check of God's heavenly ways and plan. His word, brought to us by the indwelling Holy Spirit (especially as we read the pages of the Bible) redirect our reality and deal with issues in our own lives that we don't even recognize are there. I'm not trying to insult anyone, but if you look at terrorist propaganda, American commercial greed and most of the nonsense in between, you would break it all down to nothing more than jealousy and envy at not having what you want or what you think you deserve. And doesn't that go right back to how Lucifer fell and became satan? Isaiah 14 as well as Ezekiel 28 talks about how he thought he was so beautiful and cool and how he thought he was better than God and deserved God's throne!! There is no difference between the spirit that controls the terrorists, the greed of Western commercialism or the old-time Spanish Inquisitors, for that matter. Trying to control what people wear or think is the oldest game that satan uses and has employed throughout the centuries. Look, I'm the first one to say that people dressing half naked on TV or trash-talking is something I don't want any part of. But I cannot control what they wear or think by the word of God. All I can do is share the Gospel or teach the Word as it is written. What they decide to do with it or whether they decide to even believe is up to them and God. Of course we should have appropriate laws on the books and a code of ethics that we all should follow in order to maintain society in an orderly fashion. But the word of God can speak for itself if we

will allow it. This is why so many religions try to stop Christianity. It is precisely because the word of God carries so much awesome spiritual force through the power of the Holy Spirit that it changes and transforms all of us who come in contact with Him. His miracle working power heals, transforms and sustains us in such peace and harmony that millions who come in contact with the living Christ want Him. That is a fearful thing for those who want to control, gain power and manipulate societies. If Jesus is nothing, or on the same level with Buddha, Joseph Smith, Mohammed, Krishna or Confucius then why is it that when Christ becomes real to those who follow the aforementioned, they gladly leave them behind to follow Christ, even at the threat of death or other reprisals? If there is nothing to fear from Christ, then why try to stop Him from being preached, as is done in quite a few countries?

This is why it is so crucial for Christians to be trained in the revelatory word of God. It is so easy to abuse that power (as the crusaders, Spanish inquisitors as well as many others have done). Offenses will come, Jesus said so (Matthew 18:7) and the devil will make sure of it in order to steer mankind away from Christ, but we also should be as prepared and ready as we can be in order to deliver the word of the Lord with clarity and charity. In order to do that let's do a quick review of last month's parameters concerning receiving the word before we go on to look at specific examples. I will not put the Old or New Testament text next to the guideline. Last

month's article is archived on this site. **A)** What we hear must be lined up with the written word of God found within the pages of the Old and New Testaments. **B)** There are five avenues that God does speak through: 1) The written word. 2) The Holy Spirit speaking directly to your spirit. 3) Dreams and/or visions. 4) An angel. 5) The mouth of another; either in preaching, teaching or speaking whether written or heard. I omitted God speaking through circumstances and you can look at the reason. It's not that He can't, but if He does, He will then speak through one of these five other avenues. **C)** What you hear should be confirmed by 2 or 3 witnesses. **D)** What you hear should be weighed within the context as well as examining the content of what you hear and the purpose that the Lord has in speaking to you. **E)** The peace of Christ, which goes beyond our understanding, will accompany what you hear. **F)** Obedience and faith must be exercised concerning what you hear. **G)** What you hear can or should be able to be exposed to a trusted friend in Christ or your congregation or some other elder in the church or greater body of Christ.

Again, you can look up last month's article in the archive to see all the Scripture that goes along with each of these parameters and guidelines. I reviewed them because it is important that we realize with better hearing can sometimes come superior gifts, talents or intellect (all through the power of God). And this, in turn, can and probably will breed attitudes of superiority in ability and ambition. Working through all these issues while hearing the voice of the Lord and

employing the previous guidelines set out by Scripture will help us deal with issues that the enemy could use to corrupt the testimony of Jesus Christ within us. Learning some of the other concepts that I'll be sharing will be useless unless the Lord is able to address these issues in your own heart. I have personally talked to Christians that heard tremendous things from the Lord, but their own personal soul issues were never addressed, or worse, conveniently covered up by a Christian-ease of speech and habit or a church's management position. Trust me when I say that everything looked great on the outside, but I never wanted those folks to get close to me or our ministry. I knew full well the eventual devastation that could be wrecked on a ministry with folks that refuse to deal with issues, even though they hear from God. Also, these were not one-time meetings. I either knew the person for a while or in some cases, they were actually co-workers. I'm not trying to say that we should sit hidden away somewhere until we're perfect. If that were true, none of us should ever minister. We all make mistakes and none of us are perfect. I speak about a habit of never addressing ones own issues or always putting the blame off on someone else. What I am saying is that if we want to hear from the Lord we should also follow through with Him concerning our part in the responsibility of what and how we hear.

Before we close this month, I would like to look at a contextual place that is rarely discussed when Christians talk about the revelatory word of God. Frequently we talk

about God's word from our context or frame of mind. While that is important, so often we miss what is crucial, and that is God's context or frame of mind. We discussed this briefly before when we talked about God's perspective of speaking eternally. But how does that equate or translate into His revelatory word when He speaks to us? As an example let's look to Isaiah 7. In our English Bibles the chapter starts off within the context of Israel being attacked by King Rezin of Aram. We are told that Ahaz is king of Judah and that Rezin and King Pekah of Israel are joined in the fight, but that they could not overpower Judah. Now Judah is hearing news of Ephraim joining the fight (just more armed men, since Ephraim is also symbolic of Israel). So God sends His revelatory word to Judah's king through the prophet Isaiah. God speaks to Ahaz about his current problems, within the context of King Ahaz's everyday problems and also begins to tell Ahaz about the future of the forces attacking him. This is the context and content. It would seem that God's purpose is to strengthen Judah and to prevent them from doing something rash as other kings before and after them have done. But God has another purpose, another context and some more content to go through, from His own perspective. Before He tells Isaiah the prophet anything about his present assignment, God tells him to bring his son and also where he will meet the king. Isaiah meets the king where God says he will and conveys what I have just shared. You can read it for yourself in Isaiah 7:1-9. The chapter continues from verse 10: "Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, 'Ask the

Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.' But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.' Then Isaiah said, 'Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria.'"

This is so typically God when speaking through the mouth of a prophet to a people, especially a stubborn one. Scholars have divided such prophecies into four camps in which one word fulfills all four categories. The first category is called the initial one, the second is the anticipatory, the third is the progressive and the fourth is the final or cumulative category because it is the end and cumulative effect of all the previous categories. What is involved in each category is self-explained by the term given it. The first time the Lord speaks it is confined to the initial category and is fulfilled within a relatively short period of time, usually within the lifetime of the hearers. In this case Isaiah brings his son as an example. He is speaking to a somewhat

immoral people who have left true worship behind. He says that a virgin will conceive and bare a son. (The Hebrew word for virgin is *almah* and conveys the meaning damsel, handmaiden, young girl, somewhere within the stage of life of young teenager, married or not. If not married, the girl would have to be a virgin.) He gives a timeframe of what will happen to the king attacking Judah. In Chapter Eight Isaiah has a son (approximately a year after the prophecy is given). It is important to know that the totality of what a prophet says is true, so God proves it by the birth of Isaiah's son. If this did not occur, Isaiah probably would have been stoned as a false prophet. So his handmaiden or *almah* has conceived and has borne a son. But his name is not Immanuel. There seems to be more during this child's life and timeframe than just Aram or Damascus. There is another enemy and timeframe of the land covered in briars with no cultivation going on and an enemy from Assyria. This is symbolic of captivity. He also calls this child Immanuel, or God with us. So it seems as if there is another child. In Chapter Nine Isaiah goes into the timeframe for this other child, Immanuel, or God with us. Those of us who believe that Mary fulfilled this aspect of the prophecy or the anticipatory category, realize that Jesus is the one talked about in Isaiah 9. Yet in Chapter Nine there seems to be a progressive aspect to the one prophecy in Isaiah 7. Isaiah 9:7 says "Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end." Christ's kingdom has been expanding ever since His resurrection. In Isaiah 9:7 we see a final or cumulative category to the

virgin bearing a son spoken by Isaiah in Chapter 7: “He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.” Isaiah’s almah brings forth a son. An almah or the virgin Mary brings forth a son. The Gospels prove that this Son is Immanuel or God with us. The virgin church brings forth sons unto Christ continually (progressive category). In the final or cumulative category a full grown bride, virginal, clean and spotless (in the book of Revelation) brings forth all of God’s sons into glory (symbolically the church made up of both Jews, gentiles and all those who believe in Christ from every timeframe, nation, tribe and culture).

Especially when viewing Messiah prophecies these four categories are present. But evidence of this does exist when God speaks today. You’ll see this pattern employed when God wants to give a signpost, or a marker where you can go back and remember what He said. I can only use my own experiences here since I know of no others. But we should be mindful of the possibility of God speaking this way and watch for the fulfillment of at least the initial and anticipatory categories, even though not all the congregation might live long enough to see the progressive or final categories fulfilled. Writing the word of the Lord down also helps. Probably the reason why we don’t realize God speaking in this manner is because we don’t keep records. I once heard of a church that typed out all of the spoken

prophecies given it to keep track of what God was saying to them. They were an excellent group of people and, as the elders told it, avoided quite a few problems by employing this practice. Personally I think this is great, but I like to go one step further. I have seen evidence where God will sovereignly tie in the pastor’s sermon, the worship, the gift of prophecy and some of the activities that might go on, say, for example a baptismal, ordination or some other youth program or testimonial. Hebrews 1:1 says that God “spoke long ago to the fathers and the prophets in many portions and in many ways,” (the writer then goes onto talk about God now speaking through His Son). Our God is the same yesterday, today and forever (See Hebrews 13:8). If He spoke that way long ago, He doesn’t change His pattern of speaking. The language may change, depending on the culture and age, but God is the same. Look for Him to speak to you in ways that may surprise you. Log on next month for more.....

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