



# INTRODUCTION

## **FOR THE MATURE**

**T**his book is written for pastors and established leaders who desire to see the Church grow into the fullness Christ intends. It is addressed to those who do not approach change impulsively, but with discernment and a commitment to unity.

The insights shared here are not meant as justification for rebellion or division, but to inspire constructive action among those who deeply love the Church.

When received with humility, these truths will help leaders build up the Body of Christ and prepare God's people for the days ahead.

## **NEW WINE IS COMING**

A new wineskin is always needed if there is new wine to put in it.

I believe, as do many others, the Bible tells of a revival coming such has not been seen since the first century. This revival will be so great, it will require a wineskin that is not only new, but radically different from our modern church structure.

The Church of Jesus Christ stands at a decisive crossroads. For generations, we have measured success in terms of attendance, programs, polished sermons, and well-run services. Yet none of these things—however valuable in their place—are the biblical purpose for which the Church was created.

### **Scripture gives us God's clear intention:**

**“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”**

—Ephesians 4:13

This is the purpose of ministry. This is the purpose of pastors, teachers, evangelists, prophets, and apostles. This is the purpose of church structure. This is the purpose of every

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gathering and program: to transform believers into the full likeness of Jesus Christ.

Yet despite sincere efforts, churches today fall far short of producing disciples who resemble the believers of the first century—men and women who healed the sick, cast out demons, heard the voice of God, walked in holiness, lived sacrificially, turned cities upside down, and carried the authority and love of Jesus wherever they went.

This book is written to expose the old wineskin that our churches have become: The strongholds—mindsets and traditions, that keep the modern church from fulfilling its divine mandate.

The radicle change we need requires humility. It requires courage. And it requires that we ask hard questions: - Are we producing the kind of disciples Jesus expects? - Are our methods aligned with Scripture—or merely with tradition? - Are our leaders trained to make powerful Christ-like disciples—or only trained to run religious services? - Are we preparing a Bride suitable for Christ—holy, mature and ready?

### **THE FORMER AND LATTER RAIN**

**“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and**

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**hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."**

—James 5:7

**"He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth,"**

—Hosea 6:3

Bible scholars have taught that the "early and latter rain" refers to outpourings of the Holy Spirit that, just like rain causes crops to grow, cause the church to grow. These "early and latter" outpourings have been widely interpreted as; the early rain having occurred in the "upper room" on the day of Pentecost and the latter rain beginning to fall prior to and around the Azusa Street Revival.

In Israel, the "former rain" occurs in autumn and the "latter rain" (malkosh) is the spring rain, falling in March and April. The latter rain is crucial for the final ripening and maturing of crops before the harvest. The latter rain determines the quality and yield of the crops.

**"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause**

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**to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.”**

—Joel 2:23

The above verse in Joel speaks of a mighty outpouring that has yet to occur. God is going to cause the former and latter rain to both fall together “in the first month”. This is the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will bring the church to full maturity before the return of Jesus Christ.

### **A MATURE BRIDE**

The bride that Jesus is returning for will not be a “child bride”, but a people grown to adulthood. A church that has been fully prepared and adorned for her Husband; holy and without blemish.

**“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”**

—Ephesians 5:25-27

**“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to**

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**her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”**

—Rev. 19:7-8

**“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”**

—Rev. 21:2

The Bride of Christ will be made up of a holy people, full of His glory. They will also love him with every ounce of their strength and fiber of their being. Those who have fulfilled the “first and great Commandment”:

**“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”**

—Matthew 22:37-38

This is an all-consuming love. There is no room for the world or the things of the world. Jesus is worthy of no less.

## **A NEW WINESKIN**

God is preparing His people for the greatest outpouring since the days of the Apostles. New wine is coming. But Jesus warned us:

**“New wine must be put into new wineskins.”**

—Mark 2:22

If the purpose of the end-time outpouring is to bring the Body of Christ to full maturity, what will the wineskin that delivers this wine to the masses look like? Will our existing wineskin of church meetings and training work? If not, then why? What changes can we expect?

If the current church system were sufficiently producing such disciples, then this book would be unnecessary. But if it is not—as the evidence overwhelmingly shows—then the Church has reached the limits of what its current structure can produce, and God Himself must initiate change.

This book will help you recognize the old wineskin that must be shed, and help prepare you for the radicle changes God is making to the end-time Church—a new wineskin capable of carrying the glory, authority, and maturity of Christ to the nations.

**Let us begin.**