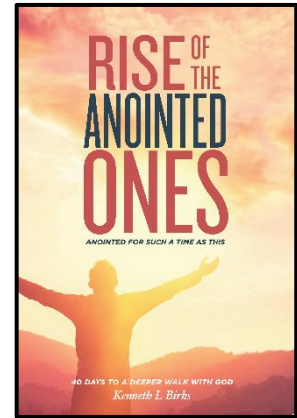


Finding Refuge During Troubled Times

Hebrews 10:23-35 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*



Even though the world around us is rapidly decaying and becoming more hostile to those who take our faith seriously, God is with us and will offer us places of refuge. Now is the time to labor together with Him as Jesus builds His Church, where the gates of hell have no authority during a season in which we are still relatively secure.

As it is, our world is changing at an alarming rate. Though the homelessness situation is seemingly out of control, with inflation reaching record highs and violence with murders and other forms of lawlessness continuing to increase, we continue to go on with our lives without too much concern. However, it's essential to understand what is happening in our world today is only a precursor of what is to come. We could be about to enter into what the Bible outlines as the beginning of sorrows or perilous times.¹

The closer we get to the second coming of Christ, all that was mentioned above and more will continue to worsen. God desires His Church to be a place of refuge and security during times of extreme difficulty. The Church that Jesus is building is to be a strong tower of righteousness amid all that is crumbling around us.

Proverbs 18:10 *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.*

Jesus said, *“I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not be able to prevail against it.”*² This statement by Jesus means His Church will be able to withstand all that comes against it during perilous or difficult times. It will be a place of refuge and strength for all who dwell there during troublesome times.

¹ Matthew 24:8, 2 Timothy 3:1-5

² Matthew 16:18

The Church Jesus is building is made out of lively stones, which are God's chosen vessels of righteousness that's — us. We are co-laborers with Jesus as we build His Church together.³ As co-laborers, we have a responsibility to build on the foundation that has already been laid.

1 Corinthians 3:9-11 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God, which was given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

To build on the foundation of Jesus Christ, we can draw from the examples of the Church in the wilderness, a type of the New Testament Church, and the Church that emerges in the book of Acts and the Epistles. What kind of Church is it that will provide a place of security and refuge for the people of God and those seeking shelter during challenging times? What will the strong tower of righteousness look like?

When the children of Israel were in the wilderness for 40 years, God instructed Moses to have them build the Tabernacle of Meeting. It was to be where they would meet together as God's called out ones to offer their sacrifices to God. God gave precise instructions on how every aspect of the Tabernacle would be built, including the Ark of the Covenant, the furniture, and the utensils necessary for presenting their sacrifices.⁴

For the building of the Tabernacle, God put the burden on the people to build it. He gave specific people specific gifts and talents to equip them with everything necessary in the building process. This is what enabled them to have a place of refuge from all the dangers and hardships of living in the wilderness for 40 years.

Exodus 31:1-6 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in

³ 1 Corinthians 3:9

⁴ Exodus 35-39



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*carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: **and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee;***"

Under the New Covenant established by the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, we find this same building pattern true. We are the living stones that God is using to build His Church in these days before the Second Coming of Christ. Wherever two or three gather together, He is building places of refuge and security.

***1 Peter 2:4-5** Coming to Him as a living stone, rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

As living stones, the Church has gone through various stages of building and rebuilding since the Day of Pentecost was fully fulfilled when the early disciples received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit prophesied by the prophet Joel.⁵

Just as God filled Bezaleel, Uri, and others with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, He has given us wisdom and anointing in the gifts of the Spirit to be co-laborers with Jesus as He builds His Church out of living stones. Just as the nation of Israel came together with all the gifts they had received from the Egyptians when they left Egypt to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness, so must we come together with the gifts we have received from the Holy Spirit to co-labor with Jesus as He builds His Church.⁶

1 Corinthians 12:4-7** There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. **But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

As His living stones, we are His places of refuge, the strong towers amid all the trouble brewing in our world. If we are about to enter into the beginning of birth pangs and perilous times, as many believe, we need places of security and refuge for those trying to escape troubled times. This could very well be the time that was prophesied that multitudes upon multitudes would be seeking a place of refuge.

⁵ Joel's 2:28-29

⁶ Exodus 12:35-36

Regardless of whether it is or isn't, we have nothing to lose but everything to gain, so we might as well be about our father's business. Let us lay our lives down for one another, offering ourselves as living sacrifices upon the altar of God's righteousness.

***Romans 12:1-2** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Let us be found faithfully stewarding the gifts of the Spirit that have been freely given to us to minister the manifold grace of God to one another and those seeking refuge during trying times. This is a season of preparation. Let God, the Father, find us as He looks down from Heaven for those who understand the times.⁷

***1 Peter 4:9-10** But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things, have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

May God bless you richly as you press into all He has for you during this season of your life.

***Ephesians 2:19-22** Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

Treasured Stones Found

Coming unto Him as treasured stones, we seek to be found.
Looking down from the heavens above, He looks around.
For those with an understanding of the times, He seeks.
With His grace and anointing filling, we present ourselves.
With sacrificial bodies as His vessels, we offer to Him above.

⁷ Ephesians 5:15-16, Psalm 53:2

Built together as His treasured Stones, we co-labor together.
To Him who has the blueprint, we build towards His measure.
Even though relatively secure, we prepare for what's ahead.
With stormy weather on the horizon, we build accordingly.
Laying lives down for one another, we press wholeheartedly.

As treasured stones, a greater anointing we seek to discover.
Given to perilous times, a greater measure, we need to fulfill.
Knitted together in His love, His measure increases for all in all.
His measure increasing throughout the world, many are drawn.
Built together, His fullness rests upon us as His treasured stones.

Found as faithful treasured stones, we glorify Him who chooses.
With hearts of gratitude, we give all praise to Him who rescues.
As His glory settles, we continue seeking Him above to proclaim.
Knowing His coming is eminent, we run with hearts aflame.
Looking for the great day, we give of ourselves, to reclaim.